

A
C O U R S E
OF PLAIN AND FAMILIAR
L E C T U R E S,
ON THE
CHRISTIAN COVENANT,
ON THE

Articles of the Christian Faith,
AND ON
THE TWO SACRAMENTS,
Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

CHIEFLY DELIVERED IN THE PARISH-CHURCH OF ST.
THOMAS, IN THE ISLAND OF BARBADOES.

SECOND EDITION.

By the Rev. WILLIAM DUKE, LL. B.

LATE RECTOR OF THAT PARISH,
AND FORMERLY OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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SECOND EDITION

By the Rev. WILLIAM DOWDELL

LATE DEAN OF LONDON

AND FORMERLY OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

CLARENDON

PRINTED BY J. B. LANE

IN THE Strand, near the Theatre Royal

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TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

B E I L B Y,

LORD BISHOP OF LONDON,

ONE OF THE LORDS OF HIS MAJESTY'S

MOST HONOURABLE PRIVY-COUNCIL,

Ec. Ec. Ec.

THESE LECTURES

ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST OBLIGED,

AND DUTIFUL HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE EDITOR.



P R E F A C E.

THE following plain and familiar Lectures will be found to contain neither more nor less than they promise in the Title-page. The Reader is presented with nothing elegant, nothing elaborate, nothing abstruse or mysterious: there is very little entertainment in them for the fastidious taste of the Critic, or the deep researches of the Metaphysician. Yet it is hoped, that the humble Christian, whose first inquiry is,—“What must I do to be saved?” will not be disappointed of an answer to this important question, similar to that which was returned to it by the Apostle: he is, in the course of these Lectures, taught to “believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that he may be saved.” But he is also carefully instructed in the nature of that faith, to which salvation is annexed; he is taught, that such a faith is only so far acceptable in the sight of GOD, as it is a principle of holiness, and the foundation of obedience; the one being the origin, and the other the perfection, of Christian duty.

These

These Discourses were composed, as the Reader will easily discover, for the use of a congregation, more uninformed than we of this enlightened hemisphere can easily conceive: he will find, that the pious Author scarcely takes it for granted, that his hearers have any notion of a Supreme Being, whose power created, whose wisdom governs, and whose providence preserves, the world, and all things therein. Like a wise master-builder, he begins at the very foundation; and his addresses, so prudently adapted to the capacities of his hearers, are arguments of no ordinary discretion, as well as humility, in the Teacher. And here give me leave to observe, that Mr. Duke presents himself, as an example highly worthy of the imitation of those, whose lot it may be to have a happier soil to cultivate, and minds more susceptible of religious improvement to inform.

For my own part, I cannot but think, that much of the good, which might otherwise be done, is obstructed by certain false ideas, which prevail in the minds of religious instructors; among whom, errors of a very different nature are observable. On some occasions, we hear the preacher engaging the attention of a Christian audience, with arguments, to prove, that there is a GOD; which he sets about to demonstrate, from "the light of nature," from "the works of the creation," and "the declarations of Scripture:" all which, if the Being of GOD is by this method to be proved, serve only to show, that the Preacher has forgotten before whom he stands; and that he is real'y offering an as-
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front to his audience, by supposing them so grossly ignorant; while he should be employed in communicating useful and practical instructions to them. And thus much time is lost, much labour is misapplied, in working perpetually under ground, which might have been profitably bestowed, in building upon that foundation, which has already been laid, and in raising thereon a beauteous fabric of moral and christian precepts.

But if these err in labouring continually on the foundation, others are not less mistaken, who imagine, that the minds of their hearers are capable of following them through the subtleties of argumentation, or the niceties of logical distinction. These persons also wretchedly waste their time and pains, without any probability of materially benefiting their congregation, by the unfortunate choice, which they have made of their topics of discourse. To such persons we cannot too strongly recommend the simplicity of these addresses to the unlearned; and such, every Preacher should consider, as constituting the majority of his congregation. If he pursues this plain and easy method of instruction, he will probably find, that those of his hearers, that are best informed, will be the foremost to commend the simplicity of his discourses. And let it not be supposed, that because he is required not to be in the clouds, he must necessarily be low, inelegant, and groveling. This is only to run from one extreme to another, while prudence, and a sound judgment would effectually guard him against both. If Teachers are more intent on the advancement

ment of GOD's glory, and the real benefit of men's souls, than on attracting their admiration and applause, they will readily adopt that plain and familiar mode of instruction, which most nearly approaches the nature of conversation.

They will choose the most useful and most interesting subjects, and treat them in the clearest and most forcible manner; they will not affect to make choice of those topics, which have exercised the pen of controversy, and which, after much discussion, are not, perhaps, to this moment fully settled; they will rather adopt the plan of that Instructor, in whom dwelt all the fulness of divine wisdom; they will consider what kind of instructions HE chose to deliver to his disciples, in those sermons, which his inspired Evangelists have transmitted to us: plain declarations of positive duty—earnest exhortations to Christian virtue—forcible incitements to that which is good—powerful dissuaves from that which is evil—precepts calculated at once to inform the judgment, to warm the affections, and reform the heart—these are some of the leading excellencies of that most admirable system of instructions contained in the Gospel; and the nearer the Christian teacher approaches to this in the plainness of his doctrine, the more good he will find himself capable of doing, the greater satisfaction will he reap from his labours, the more converts will he make from the error of their evil ways, to the knowledge and practice of the truth.

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For, in this form of doctrine what is wanting, that is necessary to operate on the most powerful feelings of the human mind? Are our hopes of future good to be excited? What is so admirably adapted to this, as a representation of the joys and glories of heaven, under every similitude that can attract our admiration? A kingdom that shall endure for ever; a pearl of inestimable price; a treasure of inexhaustible delight; and, above all, the vision of that all-glorious Being, in whose presence is the fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Are our apprehensions of future evil necessary to be awakened?—What can more powerfully effect this, than the declarations, which even this dispensation of mercy abounds with, of everlasting punishments prepared for the ungodly and impenitent? which declarations, by the way, are the strongest tokens of divine goodness; inasmuch as they are designed to discourage the sinner from persevering in a course of disobedience, and to check him in his progress towards misery and destruction. Do we stand in need of that consolation, which Christianity is so eminently capable of affording? What can so abundantly furnish this peace and satisfaction, as those gracious invitations addressed to the “weary and heavy-laden,” with the promises mercifully annexed to them? In short, the judicious Preacher has a treasury before him in the Gospel, from which he may at all times produce such instructions, exhortations, dissuaves, encouragements, promises, and threats, as the nature and circumstances of his situation demand; and has no need

to have recourse to any arguments, which cannot be deduced from this source, to convince the gainsayer, to correct the vicious, or confound the pride of the arrogant unbeliever. He is not required to renounce his reason, and literally to profess himself a fool, that he may be entitled to the palm of wisdom: but he is so far to yield to the authority of GOD, and of divine Revelation, as not to suffer the deductions of his fallible reason to rise up against it, or by any means to stand in competition with it.

St. Paul says, "I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified;" but I suppose no one that reads these words conceives, that the Apostle literally confined all his knowledge to this single subject: he means, that the doctrine of the cross of Christ, was the only doctrine, upon which he would found his precepts of holiness and obedience. It is as if he had said, I will know no other doctrine, as the basis of salvation, except that of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. The Christian Preacher will do well to adopt this excellent maxim of the great Apostle of the Gentiles; edifying his hearers on this foundation, and storing their minds with principles of virtue and knowledge, of temperance and patience, of godliness, benevolence, and universal charity; the genuine fruits and best demonstrations of that faith, whereby we shall be saved.

It is earnestly to be wished, that as well in our own, as in other countries, the mode of instruction, which
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hath been here humbly recommended, and which is adopted in the following pages, may become more general: for even supposing many of the Adults in our congregations to have advanced a step beyond this plain course of Christian instruction, the benevolent Minister of Christ will at this time find, that he has a new inducement to descend as low as the nature of his subject will admit, for the benefit and edification of those of his younger fellow-Christians, whom the liberality of the pious and opulent hath lately brought in such multitudes within the reach of his religious instructions. To these, every truly conscientious Minister will be studious to adapt his sentiments and his language, that all may profit, and all may be edified by his discourses; that the young may receive early impressions of the excellencies of that religion, which is to be the future guide and companion of their lives; and that they, whose happiness it has been to be better informed, may be confirmed in the knowledge and practice of the truth: that so all may rejoice together in the day of recompence; when, from the well-directed industry of the Teacher, and the happy proficiency of the disciple, it shall be found, that the one hath not preached in vain, neither hath the other heard and believed in vain.*

* The number, by the last return, in 1789, amounted to near 300,000.

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The number, by the last record, is 1792 - accounted
to near 300,000.

AN
EXHORTATION

USED
BEFORE SERVICE BEGAN.

My Friends, most dearly beloved
in the LORD,

AS it is my purpose, through God's assistance, to take every proper opportunity of doing you good, so it is my earnest desire, that you should show a readiness of mind to receive the instructions which I mean to give you; and that you should bring with you such a pious disposition, as will best prepare you to hear the word of God, and to practise it in your life and conversation. It is with pleasure I see you assembled in this place; though I cannot hope that many of you are as yet properly sensible of the nature of the business on which we are entering; and therefore I shall, in the first place, inform you, that when you come to Church, you are seriously to consider for what purpose you come hither, and how you ought to behave in the house of God. Now, the business

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on. which you come to Church, is to pray to God, and to give Him thanks for his mercies, and also to hear God's holy Word read and preached to you. When you come to Church, you mean to join each other in one and the same act of worshipping the great God, in the house or place dedicated to his honour and service; and you all mean to show that you profess the same religion. It is true, we can pray to God in our houses; yet there must be a communion or agreement in all religious duties among Christians:—they agree in the same faith, and must join in the same worship; and they do not make any public profession or declaration of their religion, if they do not assemble together, and show their devotion and their zeal in an open and public manner. That Christians may meet together to worship and pray to God, is the reason why Churches were built; and the Church is called God's house, because it is applied to holy uses: for hither Christian people come to pray to God for mercies, both for themselves and their Christian brethren; to return thanks for all the public and private blessings they have received; to hear God's Word read and preached to them, that they may be instructed in their duty; and to receive the benefit of Christ's death and passion in the holy Sacrament. In the Church, infants are baptized; and no other place is so proper for the purpose as the Church: hither also the bodies of those are brought, who we hope are departed in the true faith and fear of God, to be committed to the earth, and decently to
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be laid in holy ground, until the relics of Saints shall be raised from the grave, at the last day, and reunited to their souls. Our Churches then, you find, are holy places devoted to God; and therefore all persons ought to come to them with reverence. When we set our feet in the House of God, we should consider the majesty of that Great Being, to whom this place is dedicated; that God is said to be more immediately present in all those places which are consecrated to Him; that when we tread his courts, we go to meet Him there, and trust He will not only see, but hear us. And if we expect to meet the Great God in Church, when we appear to offer up our devotions to Him, we ought to behave there with seriousness and solemnity; we ought to do nothing, which may discover that we are off our guard, and not intent on the business which we are about. If any behave irreverently in Church, they are guilty of profaneness, and treat the Great God with disrespect. Such persons had better stay away, and not offer contempt to the Divine Majesty, whom they profess to worship in this place. You may observe, that Christians, when they first come into Church, appear as though they were saying some prayer to themselves:—and so every one ought to do. As soon as we enter into the House of God, we should beg God to make us intent on, and mindful of, the great business we are going upon. Some persons, it is to be feared, say nothing, but use this as a mere matter of form; others kneel down, and say the

LORD'S-Prayer to themselves; while others use a proper prayer which they have learned. You who as yet have learned but little, may say to yourselves a very short prayer, when you first come to Church; such as this: "*Prepare O GOD, my heart to pray to Thee, and make me mind what I shall here be taught, for JESUS CHRIST'S sake.*" They who are better instructed, yet have not another form, may learn this short prayer: "*LORD, I am now in thy house; assist, I pray Thee, and accept of my services; enable me, this day, to worship Thee with due reverence and devotion; help all my infirmities, and let me improve this opportunity to the honour of thy name, and the benefit of my soul, through Jesus Christ our LORD.*" Or this form: "*Almighty and merciful GOD, of whose only gift it cometh, that thy people do unto Thee true and laudable service; grant, I beseech Thee, that I may join in the prayers of thy Church with reverence and devotion, hear thy word with attention, and obediently follow the same; that, my thoughts and desires being fixed on Thee, the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, may now and ever be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my Saviour and Redeemer.*" When you have begged GOD to make you serious and devout, endeavour to compose your thoughts, and keep them from wandering; and when the Minister begins the service, join with him in those parts of it directed for the congregation; and at the conclusion of every prayer, say fervently, AMEN; which signifies, *So let it be, O GOD, as we have prayed.* When he reads the lessons, attend

tend to them; and remember that the Bible, from which they are taken, is the Book of GOD; which all Christians ought to know: and when he is preaching to, or admonishing you, give good heed to what he says. In this manner you ought to think and act when you come to Church, that a blessing may attend the devotions offered in this place.

And when the service of the Church is over, and you are about to depart from GOD's sanctuary, you may silently beg Him to accept the prayers which you have offered up; making use of this short petition to yourselves: "*Good LORD, grant that what I have this day heard may turn to my good, and make me better. Amen.*" Those among you who are better taught, may say, "*O LORD, mercifully receive those prayers which I have at this time offered to Thee, and let thy word take deep root in my heart: be pleased to pardon those imperfections that have accompanied my weak performances; increase in me true Religion; nourish me with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep me in the same, through Jesus Christ our LORD. Amen.*" We should all consider what we are to do before Church, at Church, and after Church. *Before Church*, we should prepare our hearts to pray; we should compose our minds, and think that we are going into the presence of the Great God. *At Church* we should behave decently and reverently, and join attentively with the Minister and congregation. It would be well if those who can read would bring their Prayer-books with them, to

engage their attention, and keep their eyes from wandering. And *after Church*, we should consider to whom we have been praying, and what are the mercies we have prayed for. This will lead to a serious and lasting improvement: They who can read will do well to take up some good book when they go home, and not suppose that we take leave of religion when we leave the Church; for, if we expect religion will stand by us in the next world, it must constantly attend us in this. What I have now said, I do not mean as the discourse for this day; you will hear *that* when the prayers are over: but I wish to engage the attention of all who are now present, and to increase their devotion, in this holy place.

LECTURE I.

ON GOD'S UNIVERSAL MERCY.

In the 10th Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, at the 34th and 35th verses :

God is no respecter of persons ; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.

My good Friends and Hearers,

I AM glad to meet you all here, in this house of God ; and I hope and believe, you come with a good design to be instructed by me, in what will be of service to you, both in this world, and in that better which is to come. I shall take great pleasure in giving you the best advice I can ; and shall speak to you in the easiest and plainest manner, that you may all understand what I say. And I beg you will listen to me, as your friend and well-wisher ; for, if you attend to the good advice I am about to give you, you will

LECTURE I.

will know more than you now do, live better lives, and such as become real Christians: and it will give me pleasure to observe, that my congregation behave well when they come to Church; that they are serious, and attentive to what their friend, the Minister, says to them; and that they show a greater regard for religion, and a greater desire to be instructed in their duty, than heretofore; when they seldom, if ever, came to Church, either to pray, or to hear the word of God. I do not mean to deprive you of any reasonable amusement, consistent with the duties of this holy day: and therefore I hope you will not come hither unwillingly, and only now and then, but willingly and gladly, and as often as I invite you, and wish you to come: for you have much to learn, and I have a great deal to say to you; and I am desirous to talk seriously with you about the care and salvation of your immortal souls; a business of greater consequence to you than all things in the world besides. I will tell you how you may please God, how you may live happily here, and how you may be happy when you depart out of this world. All this cannot be mentioned at once; you must come hither every time I appoint to discourse with you; that you may hear the great truths of religion opened and unfolded to you: I must take time to explain these things, and you must be led to knowledge by degrees, step by step; which will only then be done with good effect, when you lay up in your thoughts and memories what I deliver to you. If any of you choose to ask me any questions
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about your souls, or what you must do to be saved, when I have finished what I have to say to you in public, I shall be ready to give you my best advice by yourselves, to converse with you in the most familiar manner: for I am really desirous that you should all know more, and live better, than you now do; and I hope to make more converts among you, than I have yet been able to make among those, for whose benefit I fear I have hitherto laboured in vain. I invite you all to persist in coming hither, even after your curiosity is gratified by the novelty of the undertaking: for I mean to explain to you many particulars which concern your eternal salvation, and unfold the great truths of Christianity, to all who shall think it worth their while to hear me. Many of you, I am grieved to think, are utterly ignorant of the principles of religion, and in extreme need of instruction: let me therefore intreat you to consider it as a great advantage to you, that these opportunities are now offered you of assembling together here on the evenings of the sabbath-day. I shall be able to judge, from your readiness to attend, and from the seriousness of your behaviour, whether you are likely to be benefited by my instruction. Happy! if I should find the poorest of my flock, in this respect, setting a good example to their superiors in rank and station. I would wish them to know as much, or more, to behave as well, or better, than those who can read, and have time and liberty to be acquainted with their duty, but have little inclination either to learn or practise it. You will
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all consider that you are in the house of God, and therefore will behave yourselves with decency here. If you see any of your ignorant brethren misbehave themselves, by talking, and laughing, and making sport, be sorry for them; and wish that they knew what was decent and proper better than they do, that they might shew their sense of duty by a suitable behaviour. All carelessness and folly ought particularly to be avoided, when people are met together for a religious purpose. I do not call you together for sport or amusement, though I hope you will not consider this as an irksome task, but to give you good advice; and if your betters, as they are called, choose to assemble with you, I should be glad to see them, as they may perhaps be instructed as well as you.

Thus far is necessary for me to say in the beginning of my instructions and exhortations, that you may the better know my intent in inviting you to attend here; because if you are convinced, as I hope you are, that I am your friend and well-wisher, you will all suppose I mean to do you good in the work I am about; and I shall be happy if I am an humble instrument, in the hand of God, of converting any of you, be it ever so few; but if you will attend me every time I propose to speak to you from this place, I shall hope to lead many of you in the way of righteousness. I set out with telling you, from the Bible, that God is no respecter of persons, but that every one who fears God, and who does good, and leads a
good

good life, will be accepted with him. I will at another time tell you who is God, and what you must do to please him. But all of you know that God made you, and all things; and that this God is in Heaven above; and that he made the sun, moon, and stars, and whatever moves, and is above our head, and below our feet. Is it not, my friends, a great comfort to know and be assured, that whatever good thing you do, though you are many of you obliged to labour for a bare maintenance, yet, while you are doing what is right and good, you are at the same time employed in the service of a just master in Heaven, who will pay you good wages for it, and will make no difference between you and the richest person upon the face of the earth? For God is no respecter of persons; we are all his creatures, and the workmanship of his hands. He values no man for his riches or his power; neither does he despise or overlook any one for his mean appearance or his poverty. He loves none but those that are good, and hates none but those that are bad. So that, though you are poor, yet, if you do what is good, and act according to the knowledge you have of what is right, and what is wrong, you may depend on it, that God will as much reward you for living innocent, useful lives, as he will those in a different situation of life; and punish you if you do what is wrong, though you may endeavour to excuse yourselves by saying you are poor and unlearned, and knew no better. All of you may know what is good, and what is evil; when you do

do right, and when you do wrong. Your own minds, your own hearts, when once you have been rightly informed, will tell you thus much, and reproach you for it: so that you may be certain, that if your hearts tell you that you have done what you ought not to do, you have offended your God by doing what he hates, and has forbidden. You know already that you have souls to be saved; and you will be desirous to save your souls, when you shall have learnt from those who can put you in the way to do it; but till you are better informed and instructed, let me advise you for the present to live according to the knowledge you have. Now you all know, that you are to be just, and faithful to your employers; that you are not to steal or pilfer; that you are not to fight, or quarrel with each other; that you are to do your work carefully and honestly; that you are to do no wrong, nor be guilty of any fraud to one another. Thus much you all know, even the most ignorant among you. Act then according to this knowledge, and God will love you; He will look upon you as his creatures, and make great allowances for what you do not know, for want of being better and further instructed. But now that you may get instruction from your Friend (for such I confess myself) in your duty, you will be very much to blame if you do not seek it; if you can be made wiser, you surely will not be backward to seek after wisdom. Let me tell you, my Friends, that God has made different people for different employments. Some are gover-
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nors and magistrates, to make laws, and to see justice done; some He has made parents, to take care of young children, and to see that they be properly brought up; some He has made masters and mistresses, to take care of their servants, and to give them proper maintenance, allowance, and support; some are useful labourers, whose office it is to work for their living, and help to supply others with the fruits of their labour. So that you see, God has put all men in different stations of life, to make us all useful to one another. The master lives by the labour of the servant; the servant is maintained, and taken care of, by the knowledge, tenderness, and indulgence of his master. The master and the servant, the rich and the poor, live by, and support each other. It is true, the master ought to be gentle and humane, but yet the servant ought to labour diligently; to be faithful, honest, and obedient to his master. We are all obliged to do some business while we live in this world; for God did not send us into it to do nothing; and while you, whom he hath made servants, are honestly and quietly doing your business, God will regard you as serving Him, and take as much notice of you, as if you were the greatest and richest men upon earth. Your condition, my Friends, may be happy for you, if you will not make it otherwise by your misconduct. Your condition is infinitely better than thousands and ten thousands of your fellow creatures in other parts of the world. These would envy your situation, how meanly soever you may

think of it, if they could but see in what comfort many of you live; your comfortable houses, your little spots of ground, which at your leisure you may cultivate and improve; your cloathing; the care which is taken of you when sick; the many faults overlooked by your masters, when you transgress; and the liberty you have, if you will but ask for it, to amuse yourselves at proper seasons, and in a proper manner: whereas many of them are in a state of cruel bondage, not allowed to start from their work, but spurred on, without mercy, to fulfil their daily task. No such severity as this do you experience at our hands. We are willing to take care of you: if you fall into distress, we are ready to relieve you; and while you continue to deserve our regard, we are always disposed to treat you with kindness and humanity. None but the worthless, such as thieves, drunkards, idle, and disobedient, are in danger of being treated with unkindness or neglect. So that, my friends, I repeat it again for your encouragement, if you will be but good, you cannot fail of being happy.

Let me recommend it to you, to discharge your duties with cheerfulness and readiness, to go through your work with a good-will, and to set a proper value upon yourselves. There is something so becoming, and so engaging, in an humble, modest, and cheerful behaviour, that a little work done in that manner seems better done, and gives more satisfaction, than
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a great deal more that is done with surly unwillingness, with murmuring and discontent. This diligence and good behaviour will gain for you the love and regard of your superiors, and preserve you from the penalties of the law. It grieves me when I see or know that any of you have brought punishments upon you by your faults; and I feel for you as my fellow-creatures. Let me beseech you to behave in such a manner as to deserve the good opinion of all who see and know you. You are many of you in a state of subjection and dependance, and must know that you ought to be obedient; and if you will but do your duty with willing minds, they must be hard-hearted indeed that can treat you ill.

I consider the meanest of my people as a part of my family, and treat them with care and tenderness: by these means, most of them are dutiful from motives of affection, and seldom deserve to be reprov'd. I know, the care and kindness of masters will win the obedience of servants; and I recommend it to all masters, to be kind and gentle to their servants, knowing they also have a Master in Heaven. It is a duty they owe to God, it is a duty they owe to them as their fellow-creatures, and it is a duty they owe to themselves, on account of their interest. Every master must expect to give an account to God of any instance of cruelty and severity, which he has exercised towards any part of the creation, towards those in his power, and under his command.

My Friends, if you see others do what you know to be wrong, do not imitate them, nor plead their example, as an encouragement to you to do the same. If they know their duty better than you, they ought to set you good examples. You are not so ignorant as to be unable to judge between what is right and what is wrong; so that you ought to forsake the bad, and follow the good. This is the first instruction I now give you; and I beg you to consider what I have said to you this day, and remember the advice of your Friend and well-wisher.

I have a great deal more to say, as opportunity shall be given me: I shall talk to you, if you will come and hear me, of GOD—of Jesus Christ—of your Souls—of Death—of another State after you die—of Baptism and Christianity—of Prayer—of Religious Worship—of the Sabbath-day, or Sunday—of the Sacrament of the LORD'S Supper, and of the Articles of your Christian Faith, the foundation on which your obedience must be laid.—I shall warn you of those vices or bad practices, which will be hurtful both to your souls and bodies. I intreat you to come to church and hear me, on Sunday evenings; when I shall be ready to attend you, in hopes that you will be mindful of all that I shall tell you. And God grant that these my endeavours for your good may be attended with success, and that I may be enabled to bring you to the knowledge and love of GOD, and of his blessed Son Jesus Christ; to whom be rendered all praise and glory, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

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LECTURE II.

ON THE GOODNESS OF GOD IN THE CREATION AND GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD.

It is written in the Bible, the 1st chap. of the book of
Genesis, and the 1st verse:

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.

THE first thing we are to believe, is, *that there is a God*; a great, wise, good, and powerful Being, who created the heavens over our head, and the earth under our feet. Every thing we see is the work of this great God. We know nothing can be produced without some contriver, or maker of it. We cannot make ourselves, or give life to the smallest creature living: consequently there must be a power that can do this, that can command every thing, and bring to pass what makes most for his glory, and shows us the strongest proofs of his wisdom.

God is a glorious spirit, having no bodily substance, nor passions of the mind, like unto us. Although

the holy Scriptures, which we call the Bible, mention the eyes of the LORD, and his ears; yet that is only for our better understanding God's knowledge of us, because we cannot understand how any one can see or hear without them, as He doth who is the maker of them, and gave us the power of seeing and hearing. So also God is said to have bowels of compassion; by which is meant, that he is very merciful, that he is tender-hearted, and pities the miseries and infirmities of his creatures. These words are used, to make us understand something concerning the nature of God, when we speak of the excellencies and perfections that belong to Him: for, without speaking after the manner of men, we should not know how to express ourselves; and therefore we use a language of which we can all know the meaning.

The most ignorant among you, knows that there is a God. When you look up to the heavens, and see that great light called the sun, and such a number of stars, with the moon shining by night, you must conclude these works were formed by an almighty hand. The sea is a great collection of water, which must be placed where it is by some Being, who could confine it by proper bounds, and prevent it from overflowing those lands which are near it. The high hills and mountains you behold, must be placed where they are, by One who formed this earth. You know you live and breathe. How could you obtain that life and breath, unless God gave them to you? And
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if He does not continue them, you find you must die, and crumble into dust. By His Works then the Great God is made known to you. We cannot see this God; for he is a Spirit, and at present we know not what a Spirit is. We may say we do not know what that is we call our souls; and yet we are convinced that we have a soul, which gives life and motion to our bodies. Consider it is your soul that thinks, and tells you how to act. The body you see, because the body has outward parts, such as hands and limbs: but the soul we cannot see; and yet the soul is the thinking part within us, that directs us in all we do. You sometimes make use of the names of a bad heart, a bad mind, or a good heart or good mind, according as you see people act well or ill. You find that you think even when you are asleep; which is the mind or soul within you, though you cannot see it. So neither can you see God, but may know Him by his works. And, as this God made all things by his power, so He governs and supports them by his wisdom. He must be a wise God, because He has contrived every thing in the best manner.

Every thing would be in a state of disorder, if the wisdom of God did not prevent it. You see the regular and constant returns of day and night, the seasons of heat and cold, rain, and dry weather, the changes of the moon, the ebb and flow of the sea: all these are instances of the great wisdom of God; and

and this God is good to all his creatures. He gives health and strength, and food to eat; and, though we often offend Him, yet He does not immediately punish us, but spares us when we do amiss, and seeks to amend us by his blessings. When we are in danger, his goodness delivers us; when under difficulties, his goodness supports us; when in sickness, and struggling with misfortunes, his goodness interposes for our recovery, and relieves us in the time of distress. He is good to all his creatures: the birds of the air and beasts of the field are fed, and nourished by his bounty; and man, his creature, is the object of his care and protection.

You all of you know, when either by your own faults you have run yourselves into great dangers, or by sickness or any evil accident your lives have been in the utmost peril, how the goodness of God has wonderfully succoured you, and preserved you from death and destruction. All this proceeds from the mercy of God towards you, and is an argument that God is a kind and gracious Being, disposed at all times to consult and promote the benefit of his creatures. And this good and great God is our Father, the maker and preserver of all his creatures, whom He watches over with affection and tenderness. He is as much the Father of the poorest and meanest, as of the greatest and noblest of his creatures; He made you as well as them, and you are all the workmanship of his hands. He is no respecter of persons: the
good,

good, however poor, will be more regarded by Him than the bad, however rich or great; for He regards not the outward appearance of condition, but the sincerity and virtue of the heart. Only take care to please Him, and you may look upon and call Him your Father and your GOD; and He will acknowledge you as his children, and reward you with the joys of a better life than this.

It is a great comfort to us, when we are in trouble and distress, that we have such a Father to fly to, and can lay open our grievances and complaints to Him. His eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good; and from Him no secrets are hid. The lowest beggar has the liberty of pouring forth his complaints to Him, if he fears Him, and takes care not to offend Him. Believe then in this great GOD, trust in his wisdom and goodness, and He will be nigh to all them that call upon him. He has put us above the beasts of the earth, and given us understanding to know Him. There is not one of you but knows and believes there is a GOD above. You often call upon GOD to avenge your wrongs, when you suffer innocently, and appeal to his justice when you are wrongfully accused and hardly treated. You pray to GOD in the simplicity of your souls, when you suffer pain, or feel sickness; and even wantonly and profanely use the name of GOD, when you are in anger, and under the power of wrath and passion. These are plain tokens, that you believe there is a GOD; and if you
sincerely

sincerely do so, I will tell you how you ought to behave towards Him: you must fear Him, you must love Him, and you must pray unto and worship Him. By fearing God, I mean you must be careful to do nothing that shall displease Him: for though God is good, yet he is just. He punishes the bad as well as rewards the good. If you do wickedly, you do not set God before your eyes; consequently you do not fear Him. You must not fear God as you would a cruel master, who has power and authority over you, and can torment you when and how he pleases. No: God is no tyrant: He commands us to fear Him, that we may not provoke Him to punish us for our evil deeds. If you love any one, you will certainly be afraid to vex or displease him, especially if he has been kind and tender to you. You will regard him as your best friend, and study to obey his commands and do his will; you will not fear his power to punish you, so much as you will fear lest he should withdraw his kindness from you; your fear will proceed from love, and not be the effect of terror. In this manner you ought to fear God. You will look upon Him as your Father, and study to procure his affection and regard. You know He made you, and therefore deserves to be treated with that obedience which is due to a Father: He preserves you, and therefore deserves your thanks for every mercy He bestows: He can severely punish you, and therefore you ought to take care how you offend Him; and you do offend Him, when you act amiss. Though most of you cannot read your Bible,

Bible, yet you are sensible that you do not fear God, when you act against the sense and conviction of your own minds; but do those things wilfully and obstinately, which you know to be bad and unlawful. Now, if you remember that God sees every action of your lives, hears every word you speak, and knows every thought of your heart, you will keep a strict guard over yourselves, be careful to think, speak, and act, like those who really and properly fear God. You must fear Him, because He can strike you dead in a moment; and you must fear Him, because He can not only punish you in this world, but in the world to come. When any of you are going to do a bad action, only think that God sees you, and this thought will be a check upon you. He can see it, though you may use all the art and pains in the world to hide and conceal it. Only be innocent, and then you may leave your cause to God, who will raise for you friends to serve and protect you, and will find ways and means to make your innocence appear; but, if you do not fear Him, or think upon Him, but rush upon wickedness boldly and obstinately, He will bring you both to shame and punishment. Think on the power of God, and then you will be led to fear Him. He can send storms and tempests to frighten us all, and overwhelm us in ruin and destruction. Thunder and lightning can blast or dismay us; earthquakes may swallow us up; dry weather may produce a famine; and floods of rain may rush down upon us, and sweep away all we possess; sickness may visit us, and put us

L E C T U R E II.

to great pain and weakness. Is not God to be feared, who can bring all these evils upon us? Most certainly He is: however, let that fear be in us which is the effect of love, not of terror; let us all fear God so as to testify how much we love Him. God, as our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, commands and deserves our sincerest love. We must love Him above all things, and all persons, with our whole heart and soul; that is, we must think so highly of the mercies and favours we receive from this Great and Good Being, as to value Him as the greatest and best friend we have. Can you have greater obligations to any one than you have to God? He formed you, and brought you into life; He supported you when you were very young, and could not take care of yourselves; He blesses you with health and strength; He sends you food to eat, and commands the clouds to pour down rain, in order to give you the fruits of the earth in due season; and He has promised, if you will love, and fear, and serve Him, to make you happy in another life, when you go out of this world. When you seriously think of these things, you cannot but love your Maker, your Friend, your Father, and Supporter. You say, Yes, you do love God, and you know He is very kind and good to you. But let me tell you how you are to know, whether you love God as you ought to do. Now, if we love a person, we shall study to oblige and serve him; we shall be fearful how we offend him; in short, we shall do every thing to please him. This, and this only, is the best proof

proof of our love: for, merely to say you love any one, when you are not mindful of his wishes and desires, when you will offend him just as humour or passion shall incline you, when you can treat him with disrespect one moment, and then say I am sorry for it, the next; all this is an idle and vain declaration of your love.

To love GOD properly, is to do what He commands. Many of you cannot read your Bible, and therefore cannot, without the assistance of others, learn what GOD hath commanded: but if you will come and hear me, I will from time to time instruct you. However, there is none of you who does not know that all wickedness is forbidden; and if you do that which is evil, you show that you have no true love for the Great GOD. You are to speak with honour of your GOD; which you cannot do, if you curse and swear, and use His great Name in a wanton manner. If you steal and do injury to any one, you cannot love GOD, as you ought to do; because you all must know these practices are forbidden by GOD. If you quarrel and fight among yourselves, you cannot have the least love in your hearts; for GOD commands all of us to love one another, to do good to each other, and to live in peace. You may perhaps say you see your betters, by which you mean your superiors, do as you do, and they ought to set you good examples: but pray remember, that every one will be punished for his own sins. If you see others doing

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what

what is evil, you are not to do so too; because you know it is bad, and that God will be angry with you if you do it; and you ought to fear the anger and seek the love of God above all things. And it is to be wished that your superiors would behave better than they do, and that while they call themselves Christians, they would not live worse than Heathens.

Many of you set a proper value upon yourselves; and it is to be wished some others, who live very disorderly lives, would do the same. However, I recommend it to you to love God heartily, and then you will fear to offend Him. Think of Him constantly; believe that He is always present with you; and when you are about to do any act, only reflect that God's eye is upon you all the time: your minds will tell you whether the thing you are about to do is evil or not; and if your mind does tell you it is wrong, by all means forbear doing it; because, if you transgress against the persuasion of your mind, which God means as a director of, or guide to, your conduct, you can neither fear nor love God.

The next duty you are to practise towards God, is to pray unto Him, to worship Him. I will not explain this subject now, but on another Sunday; because I have a good deal to say upon it, to teach you how you ought to pray to God, and what worship will best please Him. I have now told you many things

things concerning GOD, how you may believe in Him, fear Him, and love Him; and let me beg of you to keep in your minds all you hear from me, and to come to me on those Sundays whereon I wish to instruct you. A little time spent in your attendance here will be well bestowed; for GOD, I trust, will bless my endeavours for your good, and incline your hearts to believe, and direct you to do, what will make for your interest both in this world and that which is to come. It is the duty of ministers to instruct all their parishioners in their religion; and it is also the duty of all parents and masters and mistresses of families, to send their children and servants to be instructed.

Private life cannot be happy, nor the public welfare secure, for any long time, without a belief of the doctrines, and an observance of the duties of Christianity: so that, though I principally invite the poor to come and hear my Discourses, yet I shall be happy to see others here also; as what I shall say will be of general use, it being on a subject of general concern. I observe that for the most part you behave well when you are in church. I hope every one here present will remember this is the house of GOD; and show, by a proper seriousness, the reverence due to this holy place. GOD forbid that you should come hither for any purpose but to receive instruction! Idle talking, and ridiculous jesting, in this place, show a great ignorance both of Religion and good manners, and de-

serve to be most severely censured and punished. I cannot reform a profane jester; such a person had much better keep away: those who are serious, and willing to be instructed, I shall be glad to see constantly here. And I beg all who wish instruction, to put themselves in the way of it by going to church on Sundays: for you all know that Sunday, or the Lord's day, is a time appointed by God for his public worship, and for hearing his will; not a day for idle pastimes or amusements. I hope, by degrees, to bring you to love the church, and come to it with delight. I shall then glory in your reformation, and return hearty thanks to Almighty God for the blessing which He has been graciously pleased to bestow on my labours.—To Him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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LECTURE III.

ON RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

Psalm xxix. ver. 2.

Worship the LORD with holy worship.

I TOLD you in my last Discourse, that you must believe in GOD, that you must fear Him, and love Him; and I then mentioned to you what kind of love and fear you ought to bear to this Great and Glorious Being. Now, if you really fear and love GOD as you ought, you will pray unto Him and worship Him. I am now to acquaint you how you are to pray to GOD, and what kind of worship will be most acceptable to Him. You must all know that we can do little or nothing for ourselves without the help and blessing of the Almighty : we cannot raise food to support us, unless He gives us the increase of our ground, and blesses the labour of our hands; we cannot, when sick, restore ourselves to health, unless GOD prospers the endeavours of those who attend us

in our sickness, and makes the physic given to us the means of saving us from death; we cannot say this thing will prosper with us, or that evil may not overtake us, unless God is with us to direct that it shall prosper, or prevent the evil from happening to us. So that we must have recourse to God in all we undertake and desire to perform; and that we may obtain his help and blessing, we must pray unto Him. But you will observe, that our prayers are not intended to inform God of our wants, for He knows them already; but to declare our dependance upon Him, and to acknowledge ourselves indebted to his infinite goodness, for all the mercies and favours which we receive at his hands. They show our submission to our great Creator, from whom come all our supplies, and prevent our being puffed up with high thoughts of our own consequence, since we can promise nothing to ourselves, nor perform any thing through our own strength. So that we are to pray to God for all we want, for all that is needful both for our souls and bodies. And this we do, well knowing what weak and helpless creatures we are without his constant and perpetual aid. To refuse to beg mercies from God, is to suppose we can help ourselves, which we cannot do. He has commanded us in his word to pray unto Him; and if we pray with a sincere heart, God will hear us.

You that are unlearned may want a form of prayer to express the desire of your hearts: but let me tell
you

you that it is not so much the words, as the heart, which God regards: your words may be plain; but if your heart is sincere, God regards the heart more than He does any language. You may say a short prayer for yourselves, such as this: "*I pray Thee, O God, to give me what is good for me, and to remove from me what is evil, and afford me thy help and protection.*" And this short prayer is easily learnt, and may be said often, till you learn a longer. Too many of you, I fear, can readily call upon God in a passion, when you are vexed, and are very apt to utter bitter wishes and curses. Now, cannot you as readily utter pious prayers for a blessing on yourselves and others? Surely you can as readily call upon God to bless, as to curse you; to remove the devil from you, as to suffer him to take you; and to save your soul in heaven, as to suffer it to go to hell. Suppose, instead of calling upon God to damn you, to the devil to take you, which are sad curses and terrible expressions, you were to beg God to bless you, to keep you from the devil, and save your soul in heaven: this would be a good prayer, and you might add to this prayer, that it would please God to give you all things necessary and convenient for you in this world.

Try now this prayer every night before you lie down to sleep, and every morning before you go to work; and be assured the God you pray to will be with you, and make all that you do to prosper: He will give you good thoughts; He will cause you to be

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be beloved and valued, as you will then deserve, and keep you from all things that may hurt you. If you think upon God, and pray unto Him, He will think upon you, and do you good; but if you forget Him, He will cast you off for ever. Praying to God will be a comfort to you under every trouble you undergo; it will speak peace to your souls whenever they are oppressed. You can easily beg of God to relieve your sorrows in this manner: "*Good God look upon me in my trouble, and give me thy heavenly comfort.*" Your own minds will readily form this prayer for you. Moreover, when any of you are falsely accused, you can beg God to be your friend, and show your innocence. But take care, when you pray to God, that you pray not in the bitterness of wrath and resentment, but with humbleness of mind, and true devotion.

Having told you what prayer means, and recommended to you a few short forms, I will now tell you how your minds ought to be affected when you pray. In the words of my text, you are required to *worship God with holy worship*: that is, you must pray with devotion, and in a serious manner. We must bend our knees, and lift up our hearts with our hands to heaven, when we are speaking to the Great God. We must not merely utter a few words, without attending to the meaning of them, and think we have said enough. No! we must be in earnest; we must think to whom we are speaking; and our words should be the language of our hearts. We come to
 God

God to beg favours from Him, and therefore must ask them in such an humble manner, and with such earnestness, as to show that we really wish to obtain what we desire.

If any of you were to ask an earthly friend for any thing you wish to have, you would ask him heartily, or he would think you trifled with him. In like manner, when you come before God, to lay before Him your wants and necessities, you must consider Who this God is, and not offend Him by your want of seriousness and attention. Remember, that He is a God of power, but that you are a poor feeble creature; that He is a wise God, and you are an ignorant mortal; that He knows every thing, but you know not, what shall befall or happen to you the next moment. You will then approach your Maker with a proper sense of his greatness, and your own weakness and infirmity. You must pray to this God with a due sorrow for your sins. We are sinful creatures, and constantly offend God; so that we have need of his gracious pardon and forgiveness. And we must beseech Him to forgive us all our past offences, and to give us grace, to assist us in all our doings, that we may be more holy for the time to come.

We are in this life exposed to many temptations, and too apt to transgress: we must therefore be sensible of our faults and imperfections, and be penitent,
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when we confess our sins; but we must remember also, that it is not sufficient merely to say we are sorry for having done amiss; we must also fully resolve to do so no more; for our amendment must immediately follow our sorrow. If any of us had offended another who has power to punish us, can we suppose that barely saying we are sorry would excuse us, without an assurance of due care not to offend again? The best sign then of real sorrow, is immediate amendment. This is expected from man to man, and the same must be observed towards God. To our unfeigned sorrow for having offended God, we must add a sincere resolution to do so no more; and then we may with reason trust in the mercy of God for pardon and forgiveness. When your minds tell you that you have offended God, you will readily be inclined to pray thus: "*O God, forgive me all my past sins, and make me better for the time to come.*" But then you must both resolve and endeavour to grow better: mere wishes will not be sufficient; you must strive to alter your practices, and amend your lives. This you may not perhaps be able to do at once; but you must endeavour to do it by degrees: and when God finds you willing, He will be most ready to assist you; till, from being wicked, you may become holy and religious.

When you pray to God, you must pray with minds as free as possible from the disturbance of anger, and ill will; you must pray with gentleness of mind;

mind; you must banish all passion or vexation; for God will not hear us, if we speak to Him when our minds are ruffled and disturbed. We must be content with what He appoints to be our lot and station of life. We are not to pray that we may be suddenly removed from one state of life to another, which we know we cannot obtain: this would be a vain wish and an idle prayer. The best prayer that you can offer as to the things of this world, is that which is found in your Bible, in these words: "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

We should submit to God's will, as always best for his creatures; and the most ignorant among you may form such a short prayer as this for himself: "*O God, thy will be done; and make me obedient to it in all things. I am thy creature, and I leave myself to thy disposal; let me not murmur at my lot, but give me patience to bear whatever thy wisdom shall ordain for me.*" Amen. I have mentioned some short prayers for you, which you may easily learn by heart, and in which I shall be ready to assist you at proper times. I wish you all thoroughly to consider the comfort and advantage you will have in praying to God. He will hear all his creatures who lift up their souls to Him in hearty and earnest prayer, from the poor prisoner in the dungeon, to the king who sitteth upon his throne:
for

for GOD is far higher than the highest of the sons of men. Never doubt therefore but his ear will be open to your prayers, if you pray to Him in an humble devout manner; for He made you, and you are his creatures. But let your devotion to GOD be made acceptable by the goodness and proper order of your lives; for GOD heareth not sinners, continuing in their evil courses. So that you must resolve to amend from this day, and be good; and then GOD will hear the shortest prayer you can offer to Him, and He will give you good thoughts, and put good words into your mouths.

As I have discoursed to you concerning the Great GOD, the next time we meet together, I shall discourse to you concerning Jesus Christ;—Who He is,—What you are to believe about Him,—What He did to save you, and—How you may receive the benefit of that salvation; only observing concerning Him at present, that it is for His sake that our prayers are heard. As this will be a necessary discourse for you to hear, I invite you earnestly to come and hear it; for a great deal depends upon the death and merits of Christ, for such poor sinful creatures as we are. You have heard of Jesus Christ, and I hope you believe in Him; but I wish to tell you more of Him than you know at present: by no means therefore omit this material part of my instructions: and let me at this time seriously recommend it to you, to offer up hearty prayers to GOD for all his mercies and favours, and

and to leave yourselves to God's good pleasure, whether He shall grant or deny your requests. God doth not always grant immediately what He designs to grant, and hath given us the fullest permission to ask. He delays it perhaps for a time, to exercise our patience and trust in Him. Besides, we often wish and pray for many things, which, if we had them, would prove hurtful to us. God, in this case, is so good and kind, as not to give us what He knows would turn to snares or curses, instead of blessings.

We must pray that his will may be done, because He knows, better than we do ourselves, what will be most for his glory and our advantage. And again, let me beg you to remember, that holiness of heart and life, an utter hatred of sin, and a love of virtue must attend our prayers; for God, as the Scripture tells us, will not regard sinners who continue in love with sin; but if any man be a worshipper of God, that is, believes in Him, trusts in Him, and desires to obey Him, him God heareth. As we are not able of ourselves to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve Him; so let us beg of God to give us his grace, that is, put good thoughts and good inclinations into our hearts, that we may serve and obey Him truly and faithfully all the days of our lives: And each of you may very properly pray thus: "*Incline my heart, O God, to all goodness, and make me thy true and faithful servant, through JESUS CHRIST.*" Amen. Pray to God every day of your lives, in the evening

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before

before you lie down to rest, and in the morning as soon as you rise; and occasionally, even at your work, you may think of God, and beg Him to bless your labours. For the Great God allows all his creatures to call upon Him: you are his creatures; and if you are rightly disposed, and pray earnestly to God, and both wish and endeavour to please Him, you may depend upon it, God will hear your prayers. When you go from this place, let me caution you, that you do not dispute, or quarrel with each other; for this would show that you are not the better for all which I have said, and that you did not come to hear me for a good purpose.

Those who wish to profit by me, will come cheerfully and gladly when the service begins, showing a forwardness to receive my advice, and to learn what they should believe, and do, in order to be happy in this world and the next. All that wish you well, will rejoice in your readiness to come to Church. Your masters and mistresses, if they are persons of sense and reason, will encourage you to do so. They know full well, that it is my earnest wish to give you all the good advice I can, and endeavour to persuade you to lead such lives, as will make you more obedient, more faithful, more sober, more honest, and more industrious in your service. If I can work any reformation among you, I certainly shall do the greatest kindness, not only to yourselves, but also to them to whom you belong. If any shall despise my labours,
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and even find fault with these my well-intended endeavours, they are to be pitied, as persons that have not considered the matter properly; which if ever they do, they will alter their opinion, and think and talk more reasonably. If I should even be reviled by some evil-minded people for these my exhortations to you, such revilings will give me no pain on my account, so long as I am sensible I am discharging my duty towards those who stand in so much need, as many of you do, of instruction and reformation.

I shall sum up all with this observation of King Solomon, who was called the wisest of men: "*The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*" I pray God therefore to dispose your minds to hear me with reverence and attention, and make me an humble instrument, in his hand, of your conversion; and that for the sake of his blessed son, Jesus Christ our LORD: to whom, with the Holy Spirit, the eternal, immortal, invisible, and only wise God, be given all honour, and glory, and praise, world without end. Amen.

LECTURE IV.

ON THE MERCY OF GOD IN THE REDEMPTION OF SINNERS.

St. Paul, who was a minister of Jesus Christ, tells another minister of Christ, called Timothy, in his first Letter or Epistle, at the first chapter and 15th verse, that

Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

YOU have all heard of our Saviour, that He was the only begotten Son of the Great God; that He came down from Heaven, and was born in this world; that He died for the sins of mankind; and that the Great God will, on our repentance for all our sins, believing in this Saviour, and obeying his commands, forgive us our offences, and receive us into Heaven, on account of what Jesus Christ hath done for us. Know then, that Jesus Christ died for us all; for all mankind, without any difference or distinction of persons; for high and low, for rich and poor, for bond and free: so that the meanest of
you

you all are capable of the salvation procured by Christ, if you believe in Him, if you are convinced that He is your Saviour, and will observe and do all which He has commanded you. Without this, none of us can expect to be saved, as that salvation is offered to us on certain terms and conditions. This Jesus Christ was God as well as Man; as God, He saved us; as Man, He died for us. We are told in the Bible, which is the book of God, that when He came into the world, He was both God and Man; but how He could be both we cannot understand: yet this we must believe, because God hath told us so, who is Truth itself. There are many things we believe, that we cannot understand. Does any of you know how the blood in your bodies runs into your heart and veins; how trees and plants grow from seeds and roots; how the wind blows, and what kind of thing the wind is? You see these things, and know they are so, but cannot tell how they are brought to pass. So likewise there are many truths, which our knowledge and experience tell us are so, but yet we cannot account for the nature of them. There is but one God; and yet we believe this Jesus Christ, our Saviour, is God who saved us, and was man who died for us; but how the divine nature was joined with the human in the person of Christ, we cannot tell; because God has not declared this to us, and because the subject is beyond and above our understanding. You are to believe that this extraordinary Being came down from heaven, being sent into the

world to save you. This was the end of his being born, that He might die for our salvation. But before his death, He told us the will of God; He told us what He expects to be done by all his creatures before they can be saved.

You are certainly desirous of salvation when you die, and therefore you ought to know what you must do to be saved. As I told you before, that you must believe in God, so I now tell you that you must believe in Jesus Christ: you must believe Him to be a very great person, the only beloved Son of God; that He was born in the world, and lived several years in it; that He showed his great power by doing many wonderful works; such as curing the sick by a word, or by a touch; giving sight to the blind, making the lame to walk, and raising the dead.

All these were wonderful works, which none but God could do, or could allow to be done by others. These works showed the great power and authority of Jesus Christ, while He was upon earth; and as He worked many miracles, so He preached to others, and told them the will of God. Now what He said when upon earth, is put down in writing, in that book of God which we call the New Testament; which, as many of you cannot read it, I must tell you, if you will come and hear me, what is written therein.

I will tell you why this Jesus Christ our Saviour came down from heaven to save sinners, because some
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of you may wish to ask me, Could not God save his creatures of his own free mercy, without sending this divine person, Jesus Christ, into the world to die for them? Pray remember that the Great God is also a just God. If He says He will punish all sinners, He must do so according to his word. But yet He may save them, consistent with his goodness, for He is a good God; and He best knows how He may be just in the punishment of sin, and yet merciful in saving sinners, and forgiving their offences. Nothing could satisfy the justice of God in forgiving sinners, but his Son, our Saviour, dying for them, and taking our punishment upon himself. God himself, of his own mercy, found out a way, whereby He could satisfy his justice in forgiving us poor sinners, without contradicting Himself; and this way was, that Christ should come into the world, and die for us; that a Great Person should come from God, who was dear to God, and was with Him in heaven before the world was; and, after living a life of holiness and perfect innocence, should suffer a cruel death in our behalf, and by his punishment for our sins should save us poor creatures and sinners from God's wrath. And are not you, my Friends, comforted with the thought, that the Son of God died to save you, and that you will be saved, if your continuance in sin does not deprive you of so great a mercy? I shall put you all into the way how you may be made partakers of this loving kindness.

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Jesus Christ is called our Saviour and Redeemer, because He saved us from the punishment due to our sins, and redeemed us; paid down a price, no less a price than his own blood, to purchase our freedom from the slavery of sin and Satan, that is the devil. He is called our Mediator, because He intercedes for us, and begs his Father in heaven to pardon all our sins, and make us happy in the world to come. When we have offended God, we now know how to apply for mercy and forgiveness; we beg God not to forsake us, on our showing a true sorrow for our sins, and hearty purposes not to offend again. Were it not for this Mediator, we all know ourselves to be so great sinners, and are so sensible that the Great God is a holy and pure God, that we should not dare to approach his divine Majesty without some one to intercede and beg for us; and therefore we all plead the merits of Jesus Christ, what He has done and suffered for us, as an atonement for our past transgressions. Christ is called our Advocate with the Father. I will tell you what an Advocate means. When a servant has grievously offended his master, it is natural to expect that he should fly from punishment, and that he should be earnestly desirous to procure some friend to beg for him, that he may be forgiven. His friend is his Advocate and intercessor: so called because he stands between the offending servant and his master's anger, and delivers him, by his intercession, from the punishment he feared. Thus the case stands between God and us. We have offended
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God, and fear He will punish us. His justice obliges Him to do so: but we want some powerful Advocate to befriend and beg for us. This friend is JESUS CHRIST; and though we cannot beg forgiveness for our own sakes, yet we beg He will graciously pardon us for his dear Son's sake, our Mediator, Advocate, and Intercessor, who we trust will plead for us, and on whose merits we confidently rely.

You see how necessary it is, not only to believe in Jesus Christ our Saviour, but to trust in Him; because we can say nothing in excuse for ourselves to a just and perfect God: but we have a kind Friend in the court of heaven, who will undertake our cause, and can serve us effectually. As we own Christ for our Saviour, so we glory in the name and title of Christians. A Christian is a believer in and follower of Christ. He owns Christ as his lord and master, who died to save him and all mankind; and he promises to obey all his commands. Every one who takes upon him the name of Christ, should depart from all iniquity; and, as far as he is able, live in obedience to those rules of righteousness and godliness, which Jesus Christ has given us. When we own Him for our Head, we should show our submission to that Head, observe his rules, and obey his orders; otherwise we cannot be in subjection to the power which we acknowledge; and since we own Christ as our Head, our Lord and Master, none of us can be true Christians, if we decline the service we undertake,
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and conform to our own pleasure, rather than to the will and authority of our superior. And surely the great things which Jesus Christ hath done for us, should make us all bless God for giving us such a Saviour, whose merit hath saved us from eternal death and destruction, and opened to all sincere believers and true Christians, the gates of the kingdom of heaven. We are redeemed with his blood; we can now fly to God for pardon and peace, having such an advocate in our behalf. He is the Saviour of us all; and you, the poorest of my hearers, are equally entitled with the rich, the noble and the great, to the benefit of his death and passion.

Lay hold then of this inestimable blessing, and do not let it slip from you. You see many, who call themselves Christians, live wicked and disorderly lives, resting merely in outward belief, without practising the duties of their religion. Christ is not taught, and his religion should not be professed, in that manner. We should not make void our Redeemer's merciful design to save us; for, considering what God has done for us in sending his Son into the world, it is plain He desires our salvation more than we ourselves do. Possess then your hearts continually with the belief, the certainty (if it be not your own fault) of being saved—of being saved, and happy for ever. Your time in this world is but short; in the world to come you are to live for ever. What a reward is here promised and held out to you, if you will be such as you are

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are in God's holy word commanded and requested to be! It is true we are all sinners; but yet we may all be better than we are. Our greatest danger lies, in not considering what lives we lead. We are apt to lay hold of the merits of Christ, without doing any thing on our parts to entitle us to the benefit of them. But our religion teaches us a very different lesson. If we are Christians, we must live and act like Christians.

We cannot love Christ, if we do the things which He has forbidden, and refuse to do what he has commanded. If we do our utmost to please God, He will assist our endeavours; He will pour good thoughts into our hearts, and enable us to withstand and overcome the many temptations we meet with: He will also forgive us, for the sake of our dear Saviour, the frailties and infirmities to which the very best of us are subject, in this state of weakness and infirmity. But we must strive against sin, while we remember that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners: for although he died for all, even to procure grace for the recovery of obstinate wilful sinners, they will, nevertheless, be made to feel the punishment of a just and holy God; unless they become sensible of their offences, and strive to amend their ways. Sin, we are told, is the work of the Devil. You doubtless have heard of this enemy of mankind, for many of you too often mention him. I will tell you who the Devil is; and then you will be convinced, that
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you ought to fly from him, and forsake all his wicked works.

The Devil was once a great Angel, and dwelt in heaven: he rebelled against God, and thereby lost all the honour and glory he once possessed. What sort of rebellion or crime he committed, we are not told; but it must have been very great, since God turned him out of heaven, and punished him with the loss of that glory and happiness which otherwise he would have enjoyed for ever. He then became a sinner, a fallen angel; and as he hates and despises the great God, he tries to make others as wicked as himself, that they may share in his fault and his punishment. So that all sinners do the work of the Devil, because sin comes from this wicked and malicious Spirit. Now, if we are convinced that the Devil means to hurt us, and make us truly miserable, we should look upon him as our worst enemy, and do none of his works. He would make us, if he could, as wicked, and consequently as wretched, as himself: but remember, our Saviour came into the world to defeat the Devil's bad designs, and bring us all to God. So that if we do evil, we follow the example of a Being who is striving to ruin and undo us; but if we turn to Christ, and do that which is good, and pray to God to give us good hearts and good inclinations, the Devil will fly from us, and will no longer tempt us. You would surely rather cleave to your friend than to your enemy. Be assured then that
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your Saviour is your friend in the fullest sense of that word ; for He came into the world, and died to save you ; and greater love can no man show, than to lay down his life for his friend.

This Friend invites you to be saved, while the Devil is persuading you to do evil, and to be as miserable and unhappy as he is. Choose your best friend, and you will find your Saviour to be so. We must needs reckon him as our best friend, who delights to make us happy, and account him our enemy, who would lead us into misery and ruin. Own then your Saviour to be your best friend, for He loved you so dearly, as to die for you ; and surely, if we love this Friend, we shall attend to what he says, and follow his instructions and example. The Devil cannot hurt us, if we follow after God ; he will not be able to prevail against good Christians : and those who are in deed, as well as in name, the children of God, Christ will then acknowledge to be his : He will stand by us and assist us ; -He will give us peace and comfort of mind in this world, and make us truly happy in the world to come. You now see, my Friends, how great a blessing it is, or may be, for you and all mankind, to have such a Saviour as Jesus Christ. He is the Saviour of all them who believe in Him and obey Him, without any distinction of country, or fortune, or outward condition. He died for us all, so that we may all receive the benefits of his death, if we will conform to his will, and obey

his laws. Had we not been sinners, Jesus Christ would not have died for us: but He knew we had offended the Great God, and deserved punishment; and, rather than we should be undone for ever, He came on purpose to save us.

Pray consider the need you had of a Saviour, and be thankful to God for his great and inestimable love to all his creatures, in sending his Son into the world to save them. Salvation means not only a deliverance from the greatest evils we can suffer, but also an admission to the enjoyment of the greatest blessings we can receive. If you value blessings, live holy and virtuous lives, that you may obtain them; if you dread evils, avoid all wicked practices, that you may escape them. God will then love you; Jesus Christ will then acknowledge you as his followers and disciples; and whatever your lot may be in this world, whether bond or free, Christ has died for you, and will make you happy in the world to come. Think seriously on these things, upon which I have now discoursed with you; and I will tell you how you may be Christians, both in name and in deed; what it is to be baptized, to be made children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven: and God grant that these my instructions may be for your eternal benefit, for the sake of his blessed Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

LECTURE V.

ON THE NECESSITY OF HOLINESS.

Ephesians, chap. iv. ver. 1.

Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called.

I PROMISED to tell you, the last time I discoursed with you, how you may become Christians in name and in deed. I acquainted you that those are called Christians, and indeed they only are such to any saving purpose, who own Christ for their Lord and Master, and live as their Saviour has directed and commanded. I told you who this Jesus Christ was; that He was the only Son of God, and that He came down from heaven, and died to save mankind; and that all of you, if you choose it, may have the benefit of this salvation; for, if you believe in Christ as our Saviour, and love Him, and do what He has commanded, though you are poor and ignorant, yet, by doing the best you can, you will be owned by your Saviour, and as fully entitled to the merits of his

death, as the wisest and most learned among your superiors. It is not so much knowledge, as a good life, that is to carry you to heaven, when you go out of this world. You may not have the same means and opportunities of learning, as others have, nor the same instructions given you; but yet, if you will come and hear me, and carefully mind what I say, I will make most of you wiser than you are, and tell you how you may be Christians, not in name only, but in deed and in truth.

In the Book of GOD, which we call the Bible, what is written therein concerning all that our dear Saviour did and taught while He was upon earth, is called the Gospel. The Gospel is no other word, than the glad tidings or news of Salvation; because therein GOD was pleased to declare, that all sinners were reconciled to their offended Creator, and might, if they please, be brought to this great salvation.— Before you can be Christians, in deed as well as in name, you must believe in the Gospel, or that Word of GOD, which brings you the news of Salvation; and promises, for Christ's sake, to make you happy. It is not enough to be received into Christ's Church, and be made members of Christ, by being baptized, or christened: you must also earnestly pray for a true faith in GOD's word, or in that book, which we call the Holy Scriptures; for, as that book hath both commanded and forbidden many things, GOD hath graciously given it to us, as the most powerful means
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of increasing in us that faith or belief, which is to save us, and of bringing us to the knowledge of Him. It is a very great blessing to us, that the Great God has declared to us what is good, and what He requires from us; that He has set before us the way to life, and the way to death, and taught us what we must do to be saved: and this, being the word of God, does effectually work in them that believe.

The Book of God, the holy Scripture, hath this advantage over all other books or writings, that all who read it, or hear it explained to them, with an honest mind and good heart, shall know or be convinced of the doctrines or things therein delivered, whether they be of God. In this Book, for I am now persuading you all to believe in the Holy Bible, from whence I draw all my instructions and exhortations to you; in this Book we learn what Jesus Christ our Saviour did for us; how we may please God, and observe the things that are written therein: for we cannot be Christians, and live as Christians, unless we believe and mind what truths are contained in the Bible, and observe the rules of the Gospel:—Many say they believe the Gospel, that is, what Jesus Christ hath said to them and commanded them; and yet they live very differently from what they profess. Instead of loving and honouring Christ as their Master, they despise Him, and do not treat Him as their Saviour. When they follow not the things which make for their salvation, they defeat the gracious design of
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God for their good, and turn their backs upon their greatest Friend and Benefactor.

I will set before you the design of Christianity, and the means appointed by God himself for bringing that design about: for I must explain Religion to you, before I invite you to embrace that Religion; I must tell you what Religion means, and where we are to learn it, before I persuade you to profess it: God hath given us his Holy Word, which we call the Scriptures, or Bible, wherein we come to the knowledge of Him, and his glorious perfections; viz. that this God is infinitely good; and, therefore, must be loved above all things; that He is infinitely just, and, therefore, at our peril not to be offended; that He is infinite in power, and, therefore, to be feared.

By this Word also we come to know our own condition; that we are fallen creatures, and become liable to God's wrath, and altogether dependent on his mercy and compassion. This God is pleased to offer us his pardon upon the most easy terms. Observe, I pray you, the terms: we are to make his word the rule of our faith and manners: we are to believe in his Son Jesus Christ, and practise all He said to us while He was upon earth: we are to be admitted into his household, the Church, by baptism; for by this holy service we become God's children, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven: we are to pray
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unto GOD for all the mercies we want, and praise Him for all the benefits we have received : we are to beg pardon for all our sins and transgressions, and resolve, through GOD's help, to sin no more ; and we are to place our hopes in the merits of Jesus Christ, to secure and obtain for us eternal salvation. This is the religion of Christians, and must be professed by all, who wish to be Christians. I will be as plain as I can in explaining this Religion to the meanest of my hearers ; and I beg you will not be frightened, and believe there is more in it, than you can understand and practise. If I show you, as I hope to do, that this Religion makes you both happy here, and in the world to come, you will think it your interest, and most for your benefit, to embrace it. If this Religion makes your minds easy, and your lives happy, surely you will follow that, which you are convinced will secure for you the favour of GOD, and the good will of men.

Suppose you were told, when you have offended your master, that if you will do some easy thing, you may gain his pardon, and obtain his kindness ; would you not think yourselves happy to do so ? But you all know it must be on this condition, that you are to be sorry for your offence, and guard against committing the like for the future. Now you cannot have a greater Lord and Master than the Great GOD : and you offend Him, when you do what is evil ; and yet He has promised to forgive the wicked man when
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he turns away from his wickedness, and does that which is lawful and right. You are to believe all which God tells you is his will. But none, except that Person who came from God, could know the will of God; Jesus Christ is He that came from God; He it is that hath told us the will of God.

Now, if we are thus enabled to discover what God would have us do, we are surely bound to do it; especially as God has made our duty to be our interest; for, when I come to explain this matter, you will find, He hath commanded us nothing hard, nothing unreasonable; but our observance of the duties, which he hath prescribed to us, will make us live easily and pleasantly here, and give us happiness, which shall never have an end in the life to come. Do not think I shall press any difficulties upon you, things hard to be done. I shall tell you what your own minds must convince you ought to be done, and what ought to be avoided. None of us must excuse ourselves by saying we cannot perform what God commands, and the Gospel requires from us. Every one has a law, by which he will be judged; and by this law we may all discover, what our condition is likely to be hereafter, whether happy or miserable.

Let me ask you these plain questions,—Do you believe there is a God? Do you believe that what is good is his will? Have you acted according to that belief? Have you been faithful in your service, and obedient

obedient to your masters and superiors? Have you kept your hands from stealing, and your tongues from lying, cursing, and swearing? Have you done to others as you wish others to do to you? Have you been true to your word with your fellow servants, and not deceived them? Are your hearts free from malice and revenge towards each other? Have you ever wrongfully accused each other to save yourselves from punishment? Have you not quarrelled and fought with each other? Have any of you had bloody designs and intentions against each other's lives? Do you not tell many wilful lies? Do not some of you run away from or neglect your work, and thereby distress your master for the want of your service? — Do not many of you drink too much strong liquor, which inflames your blood and spirits, and makes you quarrelsome, and brings diseases upon you?

I ask these questions, not to accuse any of you, but to convince you, that if your own hearts accuse you now, they will bitterly accuse you when you come to die: for we, and all mankind, are to give an account of our actions, after this life, to the Great Judge. So that we must all take care how we live before we go out of the world, and are called to this account. You have immortal souls to be saved; let me seriously call upon you to consider the state and condition of them, before you surrender them up into the hand of Him, who gave them. Do not urge, in excuse for
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your bad lives, the practice and example of your superiors.

Such as will not consider the danger they are in by their follies and errors ;—such as are not sensible of the blessing of a Redeemer ;—such as are best pleased with the company and the pleasures, which divert their thoughts from what is to come hereafter ; such as live under the means of grace, without being the better for them, whose hearts are only set upon this world, without being concerned about a world to come ;—all these are in a certain way to ruin, tho' they will not see or believe it. Let no man flatter himself he is a Christian, who does not do the things that Christ has commanded. We Christians have the greatest obligations upon us to lead serious and holy lives. We are blessed with the true knowledge of God, and have his own Son for our Master and Teacher, our Protector and Saviour, we are received into his family by baptism, and have an interest in the prayers of his Holy Church : we know and believe, that we shall rise again, if we have passed this life of trial as we ought to do, to enjoy a life of happiness, unspeakable and everlasting. No Christian, then, will venture to live in a course of sin and wickedness, or be indifferent how he spends his time, or ever be unmindful of his Christian profession ; but he will take especial care to observe the rules of the Gospel ; he will keep pure hands, and abstain from every pollution that may defile his soul ; will keep a watch over

over himself, and not quench or resist those good purposes or inclinations, which the good spirit of God hath put into his soul. God will not excuse us if we do not serve Him faithfully; and it is in vain to call ourselves servants of God, when we do not the things which He hath commanded. If we follow our inclinations after evil for a while in this world, we shall be miserable for ever; and if we obey the will of God, though we meet with vexations here, we shall be eternally happy.

Thus hath God dealt with men ever since the world began; such as obeyed Him with their whole hearts found their advantage in it, and such as followed their own wicked imaginations, were rejected by Him, and delivered up to destruction. The only hope for us sinful creatures, is the mercy of God in Jesus Christ our Saviour. It would be a strange folly, to hope, that because God is good, we may, therefore, be so bold as to provoke Him, especially when He has declared how far, and to whom, his mercy shall be extended. Let us not mistake his meaning: He has plainly told us, that true penitents are such as bring forth fruits meet for repentance; but He has as fully declared, that the soul that sinneth, that is, wilfully persisteth in sin, shall die: whence we plainly see, that the mercy of God will be of no advantage to those, who knowingly persist in transgressing his laws. God makes use of gracious methods to awaken us, and to raise within
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minds a spirit of godly fear, by letting us know, that He is an all-wise and righteous God, to whom we must give an account of all the deeds, which we have done. Our souls are very precious in his sight, and He kindly invites us all to come to Him by a Mediator. Christ will intercede for us, and God will grant us the happiness, for which we were created. A Saviour came down from Heaven to seek, and to save his lost creatures; a Saviour has redeemed us by his precious blood; has made our peace with God, and is at the right hand of God, making intercession for us. He invites all, without distinction of persons, to come to Him; and to Him none did ever go as they ought to do, but they found rest unto their souls. It becomes, then, all his disciples, the followers of this blessed Jesus and Saviour, to receive Him as our Teacher, because He hath made known to us the will of God; to receive Him as our Priest, because He hath reconciled us to God, by offering Himself a sacrifice to satisfy the Divine justice; and to acknowledge Him as our Lord and King, because He requires us to obey his laws, and to suffer Him to rule and govern us. And as Christ is our Head, so are we to be his members, members of his Church by baptism. What Baptism means, I shall show you in my next Discourse; and I beg you will all attend, when I explain to you this religious rite: and more especially I wish all Christian parents would be present at these ensuing Discourses, when I explain to them the Covenant of Grace, and show them what

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is required of all persons, who are admitted into this Covenant by Baptism. And may God bless us all with the knowledge of our duty, and the happiness we are capable of; may He put his fear into our hearts, and not suffer us to content ourselves with the bare shadows of Religion, without endeavouring after that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord! Grant this, O God, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

LECTURE VI.

ON BAPTISM.

In Matthew, chap. 28, ver. 19, Jesus Christ tells his disciples,

Go and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.

I PROMISED to discourse to you at this time concerning Baptism. I must now tell you what Baptism means, what are the benefits we receive by it; and then what we are to do, and what to renounce or avoid, in order to entitle ourselves to those benefits. Many Christians are baptised, who understand very little of the nature and importance of this Sacrament; and the reason is, because they will not read what is said about it, or come to be instructed by those appointed to teach them. Now if you, who hear me, will attend to what I say to you, you will understand the great privileges, which we enjoy by Baptism; not with respect to our present state and condition, in which Baptism makes no sort of change or alteration; but with respect to our spiritual condition.

dition. To be baptised, signifies to be dipped into, or sprinkled with water. To be christened, signifies to be received by Christ as a member of his Church. At our Baptism, we own Christ for our Lord and Master; and we are sprinkled with water, consecrated and set apart for the purpose of washing away original sin, and intended to declare the purifying nature of this ordinance. It hath pleased God to comfort and confirm men in the belief of his promises and covenants, or agreements with them, by some outward sign or token, which should make an impression on their senses; and, as it were, set before their eyes what He promised them by his word.

We read in the Old Testament, that when God once drowned the world, He appointed a rainbow, which was to be a sign and token to mankind, that the world should no more be destroyed by a flood. God solemnly promised, that a flood should not come again and destroy all flesh; and He set his bow in the clouds, that when we see it, we may be confirmed in our belief of this promise of mercy.

The Jews have a religious ceremony to distinguish them from all other religious professions; and this is Circumcision, or cutting off the flesh of the foreskin of every male among them. When God brought the Jews out of Egypt, and punished the people of that nation, who had oppressed them, by slaying their first-born, He appointed a lamb to be eaten at a cer-

tain time, as a memorial or sign of his deliverance of his chosen people the Jews; and the feast, at which this lamb is to be eaten, is called by them the Passover; because, when GOD slew the Egyptians, He spared the Jews, and passed over their houses, when He executed this act of vengeance on their enemies and oppressors. Hence it is, that, to assist our understandings, to strengthen our infirmities, and confirm our faith, Christ our Saviour, in his word, which we call the New Testament, was pleased to appoint two outward signs of his religion, called Sacraments; and these are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. By Baptism, we are admitted into Christ's Church.—Here is an outward sign or token, that we are members of Christ, and received in a solemn manner into the society and communion of Christians.

By Christ's Church, is not meant any particular place of worship; but it signifies a society or collection of Christian people in every part of the world, separated by their holy calling or profession from other men, such as Jews, Turks, and Heathens, who do not profess the religion or faith of Jesus Christ. The church of Christ is called Catholic, or universal, because the Gospel is not confined to one nation, or one people, but is offered to all persons, that are admitted into the society of the Christian church, and made members thereof, by being baptised. Baptism is the outward ceremony used at their admission. In most actions of a formal nature, some ceremony is used

used to give force to them, and make them binding. A key is often delivered, to give possession to the purchaser of an house: a seal is put to wax, to make sure any deed executed between man and man: forms are required to signify our acceptance of a thing: and some persons, when they are admitted into any society or trade, wear badges of that society, to show to others they belong to it; as an apron is worn as a mark of some trade, and a red coat distinguishes a soldier from other men. Baptism, then, is the distinction of a Christian: water is the outward and visible sign, that a man has taken that profession upon him. It is the property of water to wash and cleanse the body; and it is, therefore, fitly made use of to show the inward washing or cleansing of the soul.—The inward and spiritual grace in Baptism, is a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness. We were born in sin; and, therefore, when we are baptised, we are said to have a new birth; we bury, as it were, our first corruptions, those evil inclinations, which we brought with us into the world; and we rise to a life of holiness. As a dead man is freed from the actions of this sinful life, so a baptised person is supposed to leave all the wickedness of this world, to live another sort of life, and to enter into terms of agreement with God. There is a covenant or agreement between God and man. We may thus understand it: God promises man, that if he will do such actions, He will give him salvation; and man agrees to accept that salvation, and do what God requires.

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requires. The covenant or agreement between both must be performed; or how shall there be faith or truth in any covenant? On God's part, we are sure of his gracious promises; let man only perform his promises and agreement. Baptism is the sign or token, that we have entered into covenant with God; it is like a seal that is to confirm this agreement.—Now the privileges thus conditionally secured to us in Baptism, are reduced to these three; by Baptism we are made members of Christ, and Children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven. It is a gracious encouragement of his poor creatures to engage in his service, that God has been pleased to enter into a covenant and agreement with man, subjecting Himself, as it were, to bestow certain blessings on us, provided we perform certain conditions: for, though in this covenant the promises made on God's part flow from his own free goodness, yet the terms required on ours, are matters of necessary obligation, and firmly bind us.

But before I enter on the terms of this covenant, I must explain to you two things in Baptism; the name given us at that time, and the reason why Godfathers and Godmothers are appointed for children, and witnesses for grown persons, to take care that the persons baptised observe and act according to their solemn obligations. It hath been the custom of the Christian Church, from the earliest ages, to give new names, both to children and grown persons, at their

their being received into the Church by Baptism; and the custom was probably derived from the Jews, who did the same thing at their Circumcision. The usefulness of our new name is designed to be a perpetual mark and remembrancer to us of our Christian profession. As often as we hear our Christian name mentioned, it should put us in mind of our Christian engagements; it should lead us to remember, that we were honoured with the name of Christ, we professed our sincere belief in Him and his Revelation, and ought to adhere stedfastly and immoveably to those doctrines and principles, which we then embraced; that whosoever nameth the name of Christ upon these principles, ought to depart from all iniquity; that when we took our Christian name upon us, we solemnly promised to dedicate ourselves to God's service; and that it had been better for us never to have known the name of Christ, than, after we have known it, and been called by it, to turn from his holy faith and commandments, and not to believe and live as becomes his Gospel.

Our baptismal name was given us, not by our parents, but by Godfathers and Godmothers. They were our fathers and mothers in God, when we were dedicated to God in Baptism. This custom may have a double advantage; it may admonish Godfathers and Godmothers, that having conferred the title of God's children upon us, they are bound to endeavour that we may behave worthily of it: and
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it may admonish us, that our name having been given us by persons, who were our sureties, we are bound to make good their engagement;

The appointment of Godfathers and Godmothers is not so absolutely necessary to Baptism, as to render Baptism without them of no effect. Infants who are sick, and in danger, are often privately baptised without them; but they are wisely and properly appointed by our Church, to see that the young member or Christian be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the LORD. They are witnesses, in the Baptism of adult or grown persons, of that solemn vow and profession, which those persons then made, to dedicate themselves to GOD; and in the Baptism of infants, they are sureties or pledges to the Church of the Christian education and instruction of those children, whom they offer to GOD in their infancy.

It is the duty of Godfathers and Godmothers, to attend to the vow and promise they make. With some it is looked upon as a mere matter of ceremony or compliment; as if a solemn vow and promise could not bind. This is a great mistake. We are obliged to fulfill our obligations; and those especially of a religious kind are most sacred. Godfathers and Godmothers do not strictly promise for the infants, tho' they do it in their name; but they promise for themselves: they promise to take all the care they can of the instruction of the child in the principles of the Christian

Christian religion; they promise to call upon the children themselves to learn and do their duty; and they promise to bring them, at a proper time, to take the profession of Christianity upon themselves. This, therefore, they are obliged to perform: and the performance of this shows the wisdom and piety of the Church, in taking such care of the religious and pious education of young children, and in not suffering the parents to be Godfathers and Godmothers. Parents are obliged by every tie and call of nature to take care of the Christian and virtuous education of their children; and others besides them are appointed, out of abundant caution. By these means parents are not acquitted or discharged of their duty; but children are hereby secured against the neglect of their parents, or against any accident, by which they may be deprived of them: and our Church hath so guarded this trust, that if the parents should die, or neglect their duty, yet still their children may be instructed as becomes Christians, and be guided in the way of eternal life.

Besides the being sprinkled with, or plunged into water in the ceremony of Baptism, the person is received into the Church of Christ in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—These are the words which Christ himself commanded to be used; and, therefore, they are used in Christian Baptism. Our obedience is due to three persons in the holy undivided Trinity, or three persons
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in one Godhead. The Father is God who made us ; the Son, our Saviour, is God who redeemed us ; and the Holy Ghost is God who sanctifies and preserves us ; and by being baptised in the name of these three, we may affirm we are baptised by virtue of their authority. Jesus Christ, the Head of our Church, knew the best form and manner of our being admitted into it. If He has given us the manner and the words, it would be presumption in us to use, or appoint any other. We may be sure He has adopted the best manner, whereby we may become Christians ; and, therefore, we must use his own words, and his own form.

Water is the element used in Baptism, for the washing or sprinkling the person from all his impurities, and is the outward sign ; and the words,—“ I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” is the form of admitting the Christian to the privileges of Baptism in the name of the sacred Trinity, after the direction of Christ Himself. You see Ministers, when they baptise infants, sign them with the mark and figure of a cross on their foreheads. This, though it is not a necessary part of Baptism, is yet a very significant mark, and no way superstitious : for, after sprinkling the child with water, the Minister says,—“ I sign thee with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter thou shalt not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under
“ His

“ His banner against sin, the world, and the Devil,
“ and to continue Christ’s faithful soldier and ser-
“ vant, unto thy life’s end.” St. Paul glories in the
cross of Christ, and Him crucified. We Christians
profess a Saviour, who died upon the cross for the
sins of mankind; and the signing with the mark of
the cross is intended to show, that the child or per-
son received by Baptism into Christ’s church, glories
in the cross of a crucified Saviour, and applies the
merits of his death to his own eternal salvation. I
desire, says St. Paul to Christians, to know nothing
among you, save Jesus Christ, who is the Saviour of
the world, and Him crucified, that is, slain upon the
cross for our redemption. And so we Christians pro-
fess our belief in Christ, and thank God that He
died on the cross for us. We are not ashamed to
own this crucified LORD: on the contrary, being en-
listed under Him at our Baptism, we resolve to fight
under his banner, the cross, against sin, the world,
and the Devil; and to continue his true and faithful
soldiers to our live’s end.

On this subject of Baptism, I will not burthen
your memories with any more at this time. It is an
important subject, and I wish you may retain what
I have delivered. I have endeavoured to make it as
plain to you as I could. The next time we meet, I
shall mention the privileges we receive by Baptism;
what it is to be a Member of Christ, a Child of God,
and an Inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven: and I
must

must beg you will come and hear me, while I explain these advantages to you ; because our baptismal vow, and our obligations to perform it, are the main concern of every Christian. You will see what all are engaged to do, when they are baptised, and also what they promise to avoid ; you will then find, that Baptism is no light insignificant ceremony, but the sign of a very serious engagement, to lead a godly and a Christian life. I have spoken to all Godfathers and Godmothers, that they make not light of their duty and sacred obligations. They must look to themselves and their charge, if they would acquit themselves of their solemn religious promises, and not trifle with their Maker, and their own souls, by a wilful breach of their important engagements in behalf of others.

May the instructions of this day sink deep into your minds, and, by GOD's help, produce in you the fruits of an holy and religious obedience to the commandments of that GOD, whom by Baptism you engage faithfully to serve all the days of your life ; through Jesus Christ our LORD, to whom be all power, might, majesty, honour, and dominion, world without end. Amen.

LECTURE VII.

ON THE BLESSINGS AND PRIVILEGES OF OUR
ADOPTION INTO THE FAMILY OF CHRIST.

First Epistle of St. John, chap. iii. ver. 1.

*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed
on us, that we should be called the Sons of God.*

IN my last Discourse to you, I explained the meaning and design of Baptism, the outward form of that Sacrament by water, and the spiritual blessings, which we receive by being admitted into Christ's Church, and being made members thereof. I told you the use and design of persons standing for infants at Baptism, called Godfathers and Godmothers, and the obligations they were under to fulfil their solemn vows and promises. I acquainted you with the meaning of the Cross, and what was signified by signing, with this mark, the forehead of all those who are baptised. I then opened to your under-
H standings

standings the form of words used at Baptism, when the Minister says,—“ I baptise thee in the name of “ the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy “ Ghost;” and showed that that form was expressly directed by Christ Himself. A great deal of useful matter was contained in my last Discourse, which cannot be now repeated; but which you will hear again, if I live, and am encouraged to repeat and renew the Exhortations, which I am in the course of delivering to you at this time. There is a necessity for your constant attendance, as my Discourses to you lead you gradually from the knowledge of one Christian duty to another, and are so connected and joined together, as to make up a System or Summary of Christian Faith and Practice. I wish many of my Parishioners to come and hear these Exhortations; especially parents, and persons of full age; because those who are grown in years may learn from them how to instruct the young and unexperienced, those whose tender years are in greater need of instruction; and the young also, if they are taught in this place the principles of true religion, will be secured from those errors and vices, which young minds are too apt to cherish, and young people to fall into.

It is a melancholy truth, that our poor people know very little of true religion, and take no pains to be acquainted with it: and the reason is, because their
 parents

parents* never send them to church. While at school, they learn to repeat, to their masters and mistresses, the words of the Catechism, by rote: but the sense and meaning of what they learn is never explained to them. It is the duty of the Minister to hear the younger part of his Parishioners their church-catechism, and explain it familiarly to them; and I should be glad if parents would send their children to church, and if masters would teach them this form of instruction, that I may hear them repeat it in this place, and explain to them what they have but imperfectly learned at school. Distance is often pleaded by people for not coming to church: yet I have heard of crowds attending at places of sport and diversion, and putting themselves to trouble, expence, and inconvenience, to go thither. Is religion then too dull and irksome a task to be minded? and is not instruction to be sought for, when it can be obtained? Is God's house to be forsaken, while houses of mirth and merriment are

* Never can we be sufficiently thankful for the blessed sight, which every where meets our eyes, in the assemblies of our young fellow-Christians on the LORD'S Day, and which the pious Author of these Instructions had not the happiness of being permitted to behold. We can easily conceive, that he would most gladly have urged to his poor hearers the example of the Mother Country, in training up her children to the knowledge and practice of their duty.

eagerly frequented? Are children to be led to shows and sports to gratify their curiosity; and are their minds to be left destitute of that instruction, which might secure their obedience to their parents, and lead them in the way wherein they should walk?—Let this admonition have its weight; and let it cure that shameful neglect of public worship, too generally observable amongst us.

I will hope better things of you, my friends; that you will attend diligently to what I shall say to you from time to time. I will explain the Christian religion to you as fully as I can, and endeavour to make you good and serious. As I told you before what Baptism means, I am at this time to show you the privileges or advantages, which we receive from being baptised. Every person who receives Baptism, is by it made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. By being Members of Christ, is meant, that we are parts or members of the Christian church, which is his body. All Christians taken together, or collectively considered, are compared, by the Apostle St. Paul, to the body of a man; and declared to be as strongly and intimately united to each other, and to Christ, as the several members or parts of the natural body are to the head. As the body, saith he, hath many members, and all the members of that one body are but parts of the body, so also is Christ the Head of the

the Church ; and every Christian a member of that body, of which He is the Head. As in every living creature, all sense and motion proceed from the head ; so to every Christian, a knowledge of God's will, and power to obey it, flow from Christ. As the head governs and directs every limb, so Christ is the head and lawgiver of every believer. As being joined to the head makes the whole body one animal frame, so being joined to Christ makes the whole number of Christians one spiritual society. As a communication with the head preserves our natural life, so a communication with Christ supports our religious life.— Christ is the head of Christians, and is to his Church what the head is to the body ; and every person who belongs to the Church is a member of that body, or in other language, or way of speaking, a member of Christ.

You see now the happy relation, in which Christians stand to their Redeemer : He is our head, and will acknowledge us to be his members, if we shall be found worthy to partake of that blessed privilege. And our union with Christ as our head plainly shows to us, that, as in the natural body, the hand or foot never disobeys the head, so we should in all things be subject to our LORD's commands, ready to obey and honour Him. By being thus united to our LORD, we may hope to be in a particular manner favoured with his blessing and assistance : we are placed

under his gracious care and protection, and may hope in God's mercy, for the guidance of his Holy Spirit: for, as from the head, all the body, by joints and limbs, receives nourishment and support, so from Christ, our head, every member of his Church receives strength and vigour. I hope you all understand what I mean by being members of Christ: you are to consider your own body, and suppose the head to be the most honourable part of the body, and your joints and limbs as inferior parts of the body. The Society of Christians is compared to the body:—Christ is the head of them; and Christians, like these joints and limbs, are parts of that body. Thus you observe, there is the closest connexion that can be between Christ and his Society, which we call Christians; because all the members or parts of the body act in obedience to the Head as the principal; and each part of the body is so joined and knit together, that they cannot be separated without great pain and struggle: for if one member suffers, all the members feel pain; such is the connexion of the several parts, that the good state of one preserves the others in health and ease.

The second privilege of Baptism is, that by it we are made the Children of God, in a sense and manner, in which we are not by nature. Every man is, no doubt, the child of God, as having been created by Him; but the Bible tells us, that all men had, by
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sin, forfeited the benefits of son-ship, and, by their own faults, instead of being the sons of his love and favour, became the children of wrath. But our gracious Maker pitying us, and treating us like children, even when thus degenerate, hath mercifully appointed a method of receiving us into his family again, after we had cast ourselves out of it, and of restoring, and raising us by degrees, to the same favour with Him, which, in their state of innocence, our first parents enjoyed.

This inestimable blessing was procured for mankind through the means of Jesus Christ; and we are become entitled to it by taking Him for our Head, and becoming his members. As many as receive Him, to them gives He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.—Being, therefore, thus united to Christ, we claim his promise to be received as Sons of God. This is a glorious privilege indeed, which we enjoy by Baptism; when, claiming God as our Father, we can approach Him with the confidence of Sons, lay open our wants and complaints to Him, under the expectation, that He will pity and relieve us, as a father doth his children, on whom his bowels yearn. You who have children, have felt the force of a parent's love. You value your children, and do all you can for their good. God hath put that love into your hearts, in order to secure your care and support

L E C T U R E VII.

support for the young and tender in their helpless infant state. Now the affection of God for all his creatures is much greater than man's can be for his offspring. God must have loved his creatures very dearly indeed, when, after they had offended Him, He sent his own Son into the world to die for them. This love showed itself in the highest degree and expression of it; that when we had fallen from God, and were enemies to Him, He sought to be reconciled to us, offered us his free mercy and pardon, invited us to enter into a new covenant of grace with Him, and sent Jesus Christ into the world to settle between Him and us, the terms of this covenant and agreement, viz. the gracious terms of pardon and acceptance, on our sincere repentance, and amendment of life.

By Baptism we are admitted into this covenant, and made the children of God. But you are to remember what it is to be a child of God; you must do that which a dutiful child ought to do: you will then fear the displeasure, and trust in the love, of your heavenly parent; you will pray to Him for what you want, and be thankful to Him for what He gives; and you will own his affection when He corrects, as well as when He smiles upon you. Obedience is the surest mark of a child's value for his parent; for, if he loves his best Friend and Benefactor, he will take due care not to offend him. So, if we wish to be indeed the children of God, we shall act as children

children of God, we shall behave ourselves as children should do, and show by our actions that we deserve to be so called. We have indeed provoked our indulgent Father by our repeated transgressions; but He has promised to receive us into his favour on our repentance and faith in Christ, and our firm resolution to offend no more. Nay, if we are in earnest to do our duty, He will give us his grace to fulfil our good purposes, and support us under all the trials and temptations, which we may meet with. Baptism admits us to the privilege of being sons of God; but then we are to comply with the engagements, which we entered into when we received that title. We are to act as dutiful sons, and take care not to transgress the commandment of our Father; or, if we have at any time departed from our obedience, as we are all too easily inclined to evil, we must return again with sorrow for our faults, and purposes of amendment; and then God will receive us as children of his love, be reconciled to us, and forgive us.

The third privilege of Baptism is, that by entering into the Christian covenant, we are made Inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven. Our blessed LORD declared, that his kingdom was not of this world.—He came to establish and manifest a kingdom indeed; but it was a kingdom of perfect and eternal glory, prepared in the heavens; that is, that He might reign for ever with God the Father, in that happy place
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where He is pleased to display his glory in the highest manner; and as He came to erect this kingdom Himself, so likewise did He come to purchase the same inheritance for others; and it is our happiness, that, by Baptism, we are admitted to the hope of it, and made capable of it. We become fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God; we are declared to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, of this heavenly kingdom.

These are the privileges which Christians enjoy by Baptism, on being admitted into Christ's Church, if they walk worthy of their holy calling and profession. But though God has promised to do so much for us, yet we are not to think that it is sufficient merely to be christened, without doing any thing more, in order to be entitled to these benefits. We must remember, that at our Baptism we entered into covenant with God; we professed Christ as our Saviour, our Lord and Master: but then, in return for the blessing of salvation, we solemnly promised to obey his laws, and to follow the rules and precepts, which He commanded for our observance. God will not be wanting on his part to fulfil his gracious promises, if we comply with our engagements. But perhaps you may ask, What can such poor miserable creatures as we do? I will tell you. You may lament your own unworthiness, and pray to God to pity you, and be gracious to you for Christ's sake; you
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can be thankful for all his favours and mercies ; you can be content with your lot and station in life, and not murmur or repine at it ; you can do your best, and God's goodness will expect no more.

Many ignorant Christians undervalue, and have not a proper regard for Baptism ; they desire it, principally, to become entitled to Christian burial. This is a very trifling privilege, compared to those I have mentioned, of being made Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritors of the kingdom of Heaven. To be put decently into the earth when we are dead, is what may be reasonably desired, tho' it is of no service to the body, which is to be placed in the grave. The service read at funerals is intended more for the benefit and instruction of the living, than to be of any use to the dead, who are insensible of what becomes of their mortal part, about to be delivered up to worms and corruption. The dead know nothing of what is doing with their bodily frames, the shell or case which the living spirit once inhabited. They are in another world, and cannot be supposed to regard any of the affairs of this state ; they have new employments, and new scenes to engage their attention, and exercise their faculties.— We may think of them, out of the respect we bear for them ; but, as they are in another state of existence, it is probable they are confined to the state they are in, without having any regard to the state,
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from which they have passed. No creature, without being allowed by his Maker, can go beyond the bounds of it; and each creature has, no doubt, full employment for that state wherein he is placed. We know of no communication there is between this world and another. No one ever came from another world to give us this information; and even our Saviour, who came from Heaven, never thought proper to describe to us all the glories of that place, any farther than that it is a place most blisful and happy, without informing us as to the particular business or employment of Angels and Arch-angels. Do not then disturb your imaginations about your departed friends, as though they were ever permitted to appear to you; rather hope that they are better employed, than in the low affairs of this scene of vanity and vexation. They want not any thing you can do for them. Before Christ came into the world, people used to shew some sort of respect to their deceased friends, as if they thought they were served by these offices; but our religion teaches us wiser things, and to judge better. Your dead friend is insensible of them; his eyes are closed, and his ears are shut, till the voice of the Arch-angel, the trumpet of God, shall awaken him, to arise, and stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, at the last day. I have been led to mention these things, as I know some people superstitiously consider Baptism as very little more than a requisite to Christian burial. I would have
you

you all consider this sacrament as procuring for your souls far greater advantages, than those which we wish to be bestowed on our bodies.

I will detain you no longer at this time, than to beg you will remember what I have this day said to you. Expect to hear, on some future occasion, what I have to say to you on the other Sacrament of the LORD's Supper, of which I hope I shall live to see many of you willing and frequent partakers, when you have been made fully acquainted with the benefits, which it was designed to convey to every worthy receiver.

Now to God the Father, &c.

LECTURE VIII.

ON THE APOSTLE'S CREED.

PART I.

In the 17th chapter of the Gospel written by St. John, and the 3d verse :

This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST, whom thou hast sent.

THE SECOND thing, which was promised in our name, when we were received into the Church by Baptism, was, that we should believe all the Articles of the Christian faith : and I come now to show you what are the grounds, on which we are required to believe them, and to explain the meaning of the Articles themselves.

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By Articles of the Christian faith, we mean those points or particulars, of which our belief is composed, and to which we are obliged to give our assent, because they are affirmed and taught in the holy Scripture, which is the Word of God. The Scriptures are the word of God, because, though they were written by the persons, whose name they bear, yet those writers were inspired by God the Holy Ghost, who was with them, and who guided them into all necessary truth. You are obliged to believe those books were written by St. Matthew, St. John, and the rest, whose names they bear; because this is a matter of fact, which has been proved, and almost universally agreed on in all ages, and allowed by others from the time in which these holy persons lived, to this day; and you are obliged to believe that these persons were inspired by God the Holy Ghost, because they themselves affirmed this, and did such wonderful works in proof of it, by healing the sick, raising the dead, and performing such other miracles, as no man could possibly do, except God were with him. You are not, strictly speaking, obliged to believe all this, because your Godfathers and Godmothers promised it for you, but because God Himself tells you that all this is true, and requires that you should believe it. Your faith is built upon the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone. The holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation, and are to be the

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rule, whereby we measure or judge of all Christian truths ; so that nothing is to be required or received as an Article of faith, which is not read therein, or may be proved thereby.

The chief of these Articles are put together in what is called the Apostle's Creed. A creed signifies a belief, and is a short form of words or profession of our faith, containing the chief points, which every Christian is obliged to believe. The Creed, in which I am about to instruct you, is called the Apostle's Creed ; not because it was written by the Apostles of Christ, as is vulgarly believed, but to distinguish it from the other Creeds used in our Church. We have a Creed called the *Nicene* Creed, which is a summary of faith established and confirmed by an assembly of Bishops and Divines met together in council on religious matters, in a city called *Nice*. We have the *Athanasian* Creed, formed by a Christian Bishop, called Athanasius, in opposition to some persons, who denied the divinity of Jesus Christ ; and we have the Apostle's Creed, not penned by the Apostles, but drawn up by the church, as containing the sum and substance of the Apostles' doctrine.— This Creed shows us in a few words, the chief and the most important of those things, which the Apostles taught the world in the holy Scriptures.

As many learn this Creed when they are young, and repeat it without properly understanding it, I shall

shall be as particular as I can in explaining each article contained in it, that you may know what you profess to believe. There are some words in it, such as *Hell*, *Ghost*, and *Catholic Church*, which require explanation; many not understanding the meaning of them. So that you see the necessity there is, that people should come to Church, that they may hear their religion opened and unfolded to them, of which they will know but little, if they do not constantly put themselves in the way of instruction. The Apostle's Creed is divided into twelve Articles; and the first is,

I believe in GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY,
MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

The words, *I believe*, are the outward declaration of the inward persuasion of our minds; and though these words are only twice used in the Creed, yet they are to be understood as applied to every Article, and to every word in each Article. I believe that there is a God, I believe that this God is a Father, I believe that He is almighty, and I believe that He is the maker of Heaven and earth. To believe that there is a God, is to believe that there is an eternal, unchangeable, and all-glorious Spirit, who is infinite in knowledge, wisdom, justice, mercy, and power; and that this great God is present every where, and filleth all things; that He knoweth all things, is

mighty in wisdom, wonderful in counsel, righteous, just, and upright in all his judgments; that He is love itself, the father of mercies, and the GOD of all comfort. To believe in GOD does likewise imply our belief, that there is but one GOD, agreeably to that which the sacred Writings declare concerning Him, "The LORD our GOD is one LORD. I am GOD, and there is none else. Before me, saith GOD, there was no GOD found, neither shall there be any after me." But here it must be observed to you, that the sacred Writers of the New Testament teach us, that this one GOD is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; or, in the words of St. John, that there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. GOD is indeed with great propriety called a Father, with respect to us, as being the first Author, and continual Preserver of all things; in whom we live, move, and have our being. But He is here called a Father, chiefly with respect to Him, who, in the next Article, is called his Son. He is the father of our LORD Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.

We believe this supreme Being is Almighty. He is Almighty with respect to his power to do whatever He pleases, or, in respect of his sovereign right and authority, to govern and dispose of all things according to his good pleasure. But it seems to me more proper

proper and natural to understand the word *Almighty*, strictly with respect to his power, as signifying our belief, that this God can do every thing; that nothing is too hard for Him; or, according to the declaration of our Saviour, that with him all things are possible. We believe also that this God is the maker of heaven and earth; or, as St. Paul explains it, that by Him were all things created, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth, visible, or invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, that is, angels and arch-angels, men, and all inferior creatures, all things were created by Him. So that, as we profess our belief that this great God has power to do all things, we here declare our persuasion, that He did exert that power in making or creating all things in the beginning; and that the sun, moon, and stars, as well as every thing we meet with upon earth, are the workmanship of his hand.

From God the Father, we go on to profess our belief in God the Son; and say, *I believe* IN JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD. The name JESUS, which signifies a Saviour, points out his personal character to us, and implies our profession, that to Him alone the character of a Saviour does in its highest sense belong. For it is He alone that has saved us from our sins; it is He alone that hath purchased eternal redemption and salvation for us; and it is He that will appear a second time for the salvation

tion of those that look for Him: we ought, therefore, to profess and declare, that there is no other name under heaven given unto men whereby they must be saved, but that of our LORD Jesus Christ. The word Christ, as the word Messiah in the Hebrew language, signifies anointed; and by alluding to GOD's commands to the Jews, that their kings, their priests, and their prophets, should be anointed with oil, it shows us in what sense our blessed Saviour was the anointed of the LORD. And when we profess to believe in Him as Christ, we profess to believe that He was the Messiah, who was to come into the world; that the types of the Jewish law, and the predictions of the prophets, were fulfilled in Him; that He was our prophet, as having been anointed by the Holy Ghost, to preach the Gospel to the poor; that He was our priest, and gave Himself an offering and sacrifice to GOD for us; and that He is our king, who shall reign over us for ever, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end. His relation to GOD, in which we here profess our belief, is that of his only begotten Son; which will be best understood by remembering the account, which the sacred Writers give us of it; which is, that He was in the beginning with GOD, and was GOD; that all things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made; that He is the beginning and the end, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty; that He and his Father
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are one; and that He is over all, God blessed for evermore. And, therefore, when we declare our belief in his Sonship, we mean that He is in such a sense the only Son of God, as no created Being can possibly be; in such a sense, as to have been eternally with the Father Himself, very and eternal God. He is indeed called the Son of God on other accounts in holy Writ, as having been conceived by the Holy Ghost, who is God; as having been appointed to the special office of the Messiah; as having been declared to be the Son of God, with power by his resurrection from the dead; and being appointed by the Father heir of all things. But Christ is most eminently and most properly styled the only Son of God, as having been in the bosom of the Father from the beginning, as having had glory with the Father before the world was, as being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and as in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

His relation to us as OUR LORD, may be understood to respect us either as creatures or as Christians. As He is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, we, as well as all other beings, must be subject to his authority and dominion; since it is He that made us, and not we ourselves. We here emphatically call Him OUR LORD, as we are Christians. As such He has bought us with a price; and whether we live
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or die, we are the LORD's. We are, in a peculiar manner, his subjects, who is the Head over all things to the Church; and we are obliged to believe Him to be, not only Our Lord, but likewise the Lord of all things; GOD the Father having highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name; that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; that is, that all things should be subject to his dominion, and every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of GOD the Father.

The third Article is, that Jesus Christ was CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY GHOST, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

Having declared our belief in his divinity, and his dominion, we next proceed to declare our belief of what he has done for us as man. That this eternal Son of GOD did become man, is affirmed by St. John; who says, THE WORD, or Son of GOD, came down from heaven, was made flesh, and dwelt among us. The eternal Son of GOD appeared in the world in the fulness of time appointed by his Father, took our nature upon Him, and united or joined to the divine nature, the body and soul of a man. By the power of GOD the Holy Ghost, a Virgin conceived in a miraculous manner, and brought

brought forth her Son; who, having been from the beginning with GOD, was now born of a woman, and made of the substance of his mother. He is, therefore, called EMMANUEL; another name given to Jesus Christ, and is, by interpretation, GOD WITH US.

By being born of a Virgin, several predictions or sayings of Him in the Old Testament, were fulfilled in Him; which had said that the Messiah was to be of the seed of Abraham, and of the house of David. In this Article we declare our belief, that our blessed LORD was born in such a manner, and of such a person, as the spirit of GOD had long since foretold of Him; and, therefore, He appeared by all these particulars, to be the Saviour, who was appointed by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of GOD, to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel. He came into the world in a miraculous manner, being born of a virgin, and not like others of the human race. But GOD can bring to pass surprising events, beyond and above the ordinary course of nature, for the display or showing forth of his power.

The first man that ever lived was not born of a woman, and had his Being and original differently from any of his sons. GOD is not confined to any laws, but what his own wisdom has thought proper
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to ordain. He best knows how to suit the means to his designs. It was his will, that his eternal Son should be born into this world for the redemption of mankind; but He was to be exempted and free from sin, and to partake of our flesh and blood in a different way from that, in which all created beings come into the world. His mother was a pure virgin, and though betrothed to Joseph, yet had never known man. So that Jesus Christ had no natural father, but was conceived in a miraculous manner. It was necessary that wonderful and extraordinary circumstances should attend the birth of this holy child JESUS, who was so extraordinary a person, sent by GOD into the world on so extraordinary an errand, as to teach mankind, and to die for the sins of the world.

Our Saviour tells the Jews, that though they boasted of Abraham as their father, yet such is the power of GOD, that He could, even from the stones of the earth, raise up children unto Abraham. GOD does not exert his almighty power, when man is pleased to demand a sign from Heaven, to confirm his belief in his marvellous acts. But when the world was to be redeemed, and his Son was to appear in the world on this great and glorious design, He was ushered in, in an uncommon way. We cannot be surpris'd at a human body's being produced in an unusual way, when we are told that our dead
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bodies, after sleeping for many years, are to be raised at the last day out of the dust, and to have our souls united to them. The one is, perhaps, a more surprising miracle than the other; nevertheless we believe it, because we know God can bring to pass whatever He pleases.

The fourth Article of our Creed is, that this Jesus Christ SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD AND BURIED, and that HE DESCENDED INTO HELL.

But here I shall stop for the present, lest I burthen your memories with too much at once; leaving you to think on what has been said, and hoping you will attend again to hear the other parts of this Creed explained to you.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour and praise, now and for evermore. Amen.

LECTURE IX.

ON THE APOSTLE'S CREED.

PART II.

Our Saviour tells his Disciples, in the 17th chapter of his Gospel written by St. John, and at the 3d verse:

This is life eternal, That they may know Thee, the only true GOD, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.

IN my last Discourse, I began with explaining to you as many of the Articles of our Belief, as I thought you were able to remember at that time; and I invited you to attend again, and hear what I had farther to say to you on this important subject. It is of great consequence to you, as there is only **One Faith**, that you should believe aright: for you
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are not to imagine, that it is a matter of as little importance what you believe concerning the Great God, his Being, his nature, and his works, as it is what you think of common matters, which pass before you in the world. Without faith it is impossible for you to please God. But a false faith is as no faith at all; and a true faith is that only, which agrees with the declarations which God hath made of Himself in the holy Scripture. Of this faith, I told you the chief points were contained in that which we call the Apostle's Creed, which is divided into twelve separate Articles. Three of these I have already explained to you. The first, in which we declare that we *believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth*; the second, in which we believe in *Jesus Christ, his only Son our LORD*, called JESUS, which signifies a SAVIOUR, because He came to *save* us from the power of sin in this life, and from the punishment of sin in the next; and called CHRIST, because He was *anointed*, or specially appointed, and sent into the world for this purpose; and therefore OUR LORD, because He rules us by his laws; He considers us as his subjects and his servants, as persons bound by every tie of duty to live in obedience to his will and authority.

This Divine Person, when He thought it a fit time to appear upon earth for the salvation of mankind, *was conceived by the Holy Ghost, was born of the*

Virgin Mary; both which particulars had been foretold, and by both which He was eminently distinguished from all other men that ever were inhabitants of this earth: and yet, being born of a woman, He was as truly man, as any of those, for whose sake He came into the world, and suffered such things as I am just now about to describe to you.

The fourth Article is, that this good and merciful Saviour of mankind SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, HE WAS CRUCIFIED, DEAD, AND BURIED, AND DESCENDED INTO HELL. This part of the sad, but wonderful story before us, in which you and I, and every soul from the days of Adam, even to the end of the world, are, have been, and will be, so materially concerned, will be sufficient for your consideration at this time.

This PONTIUS PILATE, under whom Christ suffered, was a Governor sent by the Roman Emperor, to see that the Jews, whom he had conquered, paid their taxes, and in all things submitted themselves as his obedient and dutiful subjects. The name of this Heathen is mentioned, to point out to us the exact time when this wonderful thing happened: and it was necessary that He should suffer under the authority, and by the direction of a *Heathen* ruler, that the nature of his punishment might be such, as the Prophets and Himself had foretold it would be; when
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the Son of man should be, not stoned to death, according to the Jewish sentence ; but raised up from the earth, and nailed, according to the Roman manner of punishing the vilest malefactors, to his cross. As you are utter strangers to this method of inflicting death, you are to be told, that it has every thing belonging to it to make it dreadful. It is a shameful, a painful, and a lingering death ; it is shameful, because the body is exposed naked to the spectators ; it is painful, because the most tender parts of the body, the hands and the feet, are pierced through with large nails, and the whole weight of the body is supported by those nails ; it is lingering, because the wretched sufferer, who in other cases is delivered from his misery in a few minutes at the most, is in the punishment of crucifixion kept several hours in a state of torment. For all these reasons it was a punishment inflicted on none but such, as were accused of the most notorious crimes ; of blasphemy against God, or of murder, or of rebellion against the State. Having laid these crimes to the charge of Jesus the Son of God ; crimes which, even with the assistance of false witnesses, ready to swear any thing, they were unable to prove ; they proceeded, in defiance of every rule of justice and equity, to put their barbarous purposes in execution.

Behold, then, the innocent Saviour of the world, led forth to be lifted up on the cross, and hanging

between heaven and earth, a miserable spectacle to angels and to men ; a sight, by which even the devils themselves must have been affected, when Sin and Death were overcome, with Him that had the power of death, even the Devil. At that moment, Death, by the suffering of the Son of God, was disarmed of its power to destroy us for ever ; and God our Saviour, by his submission to it for a while, obtained a victory, in which the Saints will triumph to all eternity.

We look not then, without a mixture of sorrow and joy, of shame and gladness, of humility and gratitude, on the sufferings of Jesus hanging on the cross. We lament that He suffered such things ; but we rejoice in the benefits received from his sufferings : we are ashamed that our sins rendered his shameful death thus necessary ; but we rejoice, that his mercy hath condescended to take the shame, as well as the punishment of our sins upon Himself, to bear it in his own body on the tree : we are grieved, that the Son of God, the Lord of life and glory, should be under the necessity of dying ; but we triumph in the thought, that He therefore died, that we, and all that truly believe in Him, might live for ever. For that He not only was crucified, but that He remained on the cross till He was actually DEAD, is the next particular in the Creed, which we profess to believe : And much depends on the reality of this article ; because,

cause, if his death had not been complete, and beyond all doubt, his resurrection would have lost some of its miraculous circumstances. But the Gospel historian gives us the fullest evidence of his being really dead, and that, even before his fellow-sufferers on the cross; which may reasonably enough be accounted for, by his extraordinary sufferings before his crucifixion: for, when the wretched bodies had hung, as it may be supposed, the usual time, and now the finishing stroke was about to be given, (from a motive of vain and idle superstition, that the sabbath might not be profaned), the Jews besought Pilate, that their legs might be broken, and that the bodies might be taken away; upon which the soldiers brake the legs of the malefactors; but when they came to JESUS, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs. It was impossible, indeed, that they should break his legs, because David had prophesied many hundred years before, concerning Him, "He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken." We believe, then, that the Lord and Giver of life, that we might live for ever, really, and to all intents and purposes, suffered death upon the cross; and we believe also, that He was BURIED, by the pious care and attention of a rich man, one *Joseph, of Arimathea*, who had taken no part in the counsel and deed of the Jews concerning his death. His body was carefully laid in his own new tomb, hewn out of a rock, wherein no corpse had

had ever heretofore been laid, that there might be no possibility to suspect the least fraud or deception. We believe that the sacred body, which had afforded such a spectacle of shame and reproach, as made even the lights of heaven withdraw themselves from the sight, was now treated with all the solemnities of decent sorrow; wound in linen clothes, embalmed with spices, and buried in an honourable manner. By which another prophecy was fulfilled, which said, "He made his grave with the rich at his death."

His body thus disposed of, and an entire separation of the soul from its tabernacle of flesh, having taken place, as in all other cases of death, the next Article of our Belief is, that HE DESCENDED INTO HELL.

What is the exact meaning of these words, it may not, perhaps, be very easy to determine. Many of the learned have thought differently on the subject; though all agree, that He went to the place of departed spirits; to whom, the Apostle St. Peter tells us, He preached. On what subject we are no where told; nor is it necessary for us to enquire. It is sufficient for us to believe, that even in those moments, wherein it might have been supposed He was in a state of perfect inactivity, and, like those his faithful servants, who departed hence in the LORD, at rest from his labours; his divine spirit was nevertheless

theless active in doing good, even in its state of separation from the body. For we are left at liberty to suppose, that if there was room for mercy, joy, or comfort, in those regions of departed spirits, that mercy, joy, and comfort, it was his gracious errand among them to proclaim and promise them. But we are also to conclude, that it was his purpose to show his almighty power and dominion over the spirits and powers of darkness; and to declare, as in the words of the prophet, "O death, I am become thy death, O grave, I am become thy destruction." This will more evidently appear, when I come to explain to you the glories of our Saviour's exaltation; which began at his resurrection, and were further manifested in his ascension; when being lifted up on high, He led the * Authors of our captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men, yea, even unto his enemies, that the LORD GOD might dwell among them.

But you have heard enough for the present: enough, I am sure, deeply to affect your minds, and, I hope, sufficient to make every one of you the better for what you have heard; which it certainly will, if it has made you more sensible of the hateful nature of sin; and consequently more determined to avoid

* The original words will admit of this translation; and it is not easy to understand them, as they are found in our English version.

it for the time to come. You must remember, that the end of all faith is improvement. It is a vain thing for any of us to say, "LORD, I believe," if we do not, by a suitable holiness of life, show that this faith has its proper effect on our minds.

Now it is impossible for you to have attended me seriously through the several particulars of this Discourse, without feeling great sorrow of heart, great shame and confusion of mind, if you once recollected, as we went along, that all which our Saviour underwent, was not for Himself, but you.—The innocent Lamb of God was led to the slaughter, that you might live for ever, if you do but love Him, and keep his commandments: the great Judge of heaven and earth was dragged before an earthly sinful judge, and there was falsely accused, unrighteously condemned, contemptuously spit upon, profanely buffeted, cruelly scourged, and at length led out to be crucified; shamefully hanged up between two infamous malefactors, pierced even to his heart with a spear; and all this, that before your heavenly Judge you may all be acquitted, on your sincere repentance, through his merits, and for his sake, that endured such things on your behalf. The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. By these his stripes we are healed; by this unworthy treatment of Him we shall be glorified, if it be not our own fault, when He shall come in glory, seated in the clouds

clouds of heaven; and every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him.

Let this faith produce in you a true love and constant obedience to the Author of so much mercy; and let it prepare you for that awful hour, when this once-despised Saviour of mankind shall appear in his awful character of Judge of heaven and earth. And may you all then lift up your heads with joy, knowing that an eternity of glory and honour and happiness draweth nigh!

For which blessed state, God of his infinite mercy prepare us all by a true faith, abounding in the fruits of holiness, through Jesus Christ our LORD;

To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be-given, &c.

LECTURE X.

ON THE APOSTLE'S CREED.

PART III.

In the 17th chapter of the Gospel written by St. John, and at the 3d verse :

This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true GOD, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.

WHEN we last met together, my Friends, our meditations were confined to a subject, which could not but very tenderly affect us. The sufferings of the Son of GOD for our sake must necessarily fill our minds with shame and sorrow, whenever the sad story is related to us. But it must also raise in us the highest notions of GOD's infinite love and goodness, in sending his only Son into the world, to lay down

down his life for our salvation. The sorrows of the cross must now yield to the joys and glories of our Saviour's exaltation : for the next Articles of the Creed, or Belief, lead us to consider Him as *rising the third day from the dead, as ascending into heaven, and there seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, till his return at the last day to judge the quick and the dead.*

These subjects will be fully sufficient for your present instruction ; and the remaining Articles of our Belief will be reserved for the concluding Discourse on the Apostle's Creed ; from which I hope you will have been able to receive such information and knowledge, as may be sufficient to edify and build you up in the faith of Christ, and in the practice of your duty to God and man. The first Article then is, that Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been laid in the sepulchre, ROSE THE THIRD DAY FROM THE DEAD. This being the great foundation on which the Christian religion stands, and on which all our hopes of eternal happiness are raised, it will be necessary more fully to insist upon it.

When their Master expired on the cross, the disciples of Jesus Christ, in general, gave up all as lost : all their hopes were changed into disappointment ; all was horror and despair. Two of them we hear mournfully saying, " We trusted that this had been

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He that should have redeemed Israel ;” addressing themselves at the time, without knowing it, to Him who had died for their offences, and was risen again for their justification. It had been foretold by David, that the Holy One of God, though He endured the pangs of death for our sakes, should not be suffered to see corruption. “ Thou wilt not,” says the Psalmist in the person of Christ, “ Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” And this the holy Women, and the Apostles Peter and John, found fully verified, when, going to the sepulchre, they saw the linen clothes wrapped together, where the body of Jesus had lain ; and heard from the mouth of the angels, that the LORD, both of the dead and living, was not there, but that He had risen from the dead.

If you have attended to the chapter, which you have heard so frequently read to you at the burial of your friends, you must have observed what stress the Apostle lays on the doctrine of the Resurrection ; *i. e.* on the certainty that these bodies of ours, which are laid in the earth, shall be raised again, however mouldered into their original dust, at the last day. He there tells you, that without this comfortable and important doctrine, all our religion is vain : if Christ be not risen, then there is no resurrection ; our preaching is vain ; your faith is vain ; and we Christians,

tians, who would otherwise be privileged beyond all others, are, of all men, most miserable; without comfort in this life, and without hope in a better: but all difficulties are removed; and our resurrection to life eternal is made sure by that of Jesus Christ from the dead. Now, says St. Paul, is Christ risen from the dead; and He is become the first fruits of them that slept: as surely as the harvest succeeded the offering of the first fruits under the Law, so certainly will the resurrection of the dead, at the last day, when *the harvest of the earth is ripe*, take place, in consequence of Christ's resurrection, who is become the first fruits of them that now sleep, or shall hereafter sleep in the grave.

To confirm a doctrine of such consequence, our Saviour thought it right to continue not less than forty days upon the earth, giving every proof of the reality of his return to life; eating and drinking with his disciples; freely conversing with them; performing miraculous works before their eyes; and exhibiting to the unbelieving Thomas, in particular, the most undeniable tokens of his possessing the very same body, which had lately been hanged on the cross:—Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. Such a gracious condescension produced its full effect: the Apostle, thoroughly convinced, cries out, “My LORD, and

my God!" acknowledging Him, who had so lately been the scorn of men, and the out-cast of the people, to be no other than his LORD and his GOD:—He had shown Himself able to fulfil the word,—which He had said, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it up again;" which St. Thomas well knew no one could possibly have done, but He, in whom dwelt the fulness of the God-head bodily.

Every assurance having then been given of the truth of his resurrection, while He was conversing with his Apostles, HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN: He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. This event had also been foretold by David, in the 68th Psalm; who said, "Thou art ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive:" and the purpose of his ascension is declared, viz. "To receive gifts for men, that the LORD GOD might dwell amongst them." Christ Himself had told his sorrowful Disciples, that it was expedient for them that He should go away; for if He did not depart, the Comforter would not come; but that when He was ascended, He would send Him unto them. This then was one great purpose of his ascension: another was, to be our Mediator, which has been formerly * explained to you; to intercede with the Father for us; to lay

See page 44.

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before Him the merits and the value of his sufferings and death for our sakes ; and to plead in our behalf, that his sacrifice of Himself may be accepted, to the eternal benefit of all that repent them of their sins, and obey the Gospel.

The next Article of your faith, which presents our Saviour as SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY, leads us to consider Him as employed in advancing our eternal interests in Heaven, in the way, which hath been just now mentioned ; and though this must not offer the least encouragement to a wilful continuance in sin, yet to those who have sinned, it offers every possible encouragement to repentance. If any man sin, (and who is there that hath not sinned ?) we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ; and He is the propitiation for our sins ; but always remember that this propitiation, or atonement, is only applied to the pardon of sins truly repented of, and utterly forsaken. Every other supposition would be not only dangerous, but impious. We may consider Him as thus graciously and mercifully employed, till the end of all things is at hand ; and when, as God, He shall call to the Heavens from above, and to the Earth, that He may judge his people, then shall the thrones of earthly princes be cast down, and the Ancient of Days shall sit, whose garment shall be white as snow, and the hair of his

head like the pure wool : His throne shall be like the fiery flames, and his wheels as burning fire : thousand thousands shall minister unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand shall stand before Him : the judgment shall be set, and the books shall be opened. This is the Prophet Daniel's description of that awful solemnity. St. John tells us, that, behold ! He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him ; and the Angels who were attendant on him in his last moments upon the earth, and the witnesses of his ascension, assure the astonished spectators, that the same Jesus, whom they saw taken up from them into Heaven, should come in like manner as they had seen Him go into Heaven.

Here, my friends, I would wish you to reflect a moment on the purpose of his coming ; the day and hour of which knoweth no man : His business will be to judge the quick and the dead. By the Quick, we mean those who shall be alive when this awful event shall take place : such as remain, and are alive at the coming of the LORD, shall not prevent, or be before-hand with them which are asleep ; for the LORD Himself, saith the Apostle, shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then they which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them
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in the clouds, to meet the LORD in the air; and so to be ever with the LORD.

The instruction which the Apostle draws from this doctrine, is the properest application to be made from this Discourse. "Ye know," says he, "that the day of the LORD," by which he means this day of judgement "so cometh as a thief in the night: and when men shall say, 'peace and safety,' vainly flattering themselves that all is well with them, then sudden destruction shall come upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." Thanks be to GOD, my brethren, ye are not in darkness, like those poor heathens, of whom I have just been speaking. It has been my business, in all my former Discourses to you, to enlighten your minds with the knowledge of the truth; and GOD's grace hath, I trust, seconded my poor endeavours, and will yet continue to prosper them for your benefit. There is no danger, if ye remember only what ye have this day heard, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all, I hope, the children of light, and the children of the day; furnished with such degrees of spiritual light and knowledge, as will be sufficient for the direction of your feet in the ways of holiness and peace. Blessed be GOD, we are not of the night, nor of darkness. But then let us remember, that our obligations to holiness are increased in proportion to the advantages which we enjoy. We must not sleep,

sleep, that is, be idle and negligent of our Christian duty, as others do who live in darkness and ignorance; but we must watch and be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and, for an helmet, the hope of salvation: for GOD, he tells us, hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our LORD Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

To live with GOD, is to be blessed with every possible degree of happiness, of which your nature is capable, and that to endless ages. Pray, therefore, that ye may be so enabled to discharge your duty towards GOD and man, that ye may be so enabled to live in a constant preparation for the hour of death, and for the day of judgement, that when He, who is the Great Author of our spiritual life, shall appear, we also may appear with Him in glory everlasting, and be made-partakers of the joy of our LORD:

To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be given all honour and glory and praise, world without end. Amen.

LECTURE XI.

ON THE APOSTLES' CREED.

PART IV.

St. Paul thus addresses his first Epistle, chapter 1.
verse 2 :

*Unto the Church of GOD, which is at Corinth, to
them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be
saints, with all that in every place call upon the name
of Jesus Christ our LORD.*

I HAVE endeavoured, in my former instructions,
to explain to you, my Friends, as far as our time
and opportunities would permit, the several Articles
of the Christian Faith, as they are contained in what
we call the Apostles' Creed. On this subject I have
shown what we are taught to believe, concerning the
glory and majesty of God the Father, and the hu-
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miliation and exaltation of God the Son; who, for us men, and for our Salvation, came down from Heaven; was born and lived in a low estate; was crucified, dead and buried, for our sakes; and was raised by his own divine power from the grave; and sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God, till He shall come at the end of the world, to be our judge. I hope you attended to the several particulars, which I laid before you with as much plainness, as the nature of my subject would admit of; and I hope you will be not less attentive to what I have further to say to you on the remaining Articles of the Christian faith.

You have been taught to say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost;" by which you declare your belief, that the Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit, is God, equal in glory, majesty, and eternity, with God the Father and the Son, in a manner, which is above all human capacity to comprehend; but is nevertheless to be believed, as most assuredly declared in the Bible, which contains the words of unerring truth.

The Holy Ghost, or Holy Spirit of God, is our director and guide, our helper and support, our refuge and strength, the Author and Giver of all spiritual gifts. These are the offices assigned to this divine Person in the holy Scripture. It was by His inspiration, that the Prophets and holy Men of God
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spake, when they delivered the words of eternal life to mankind. As the Father is said to be the Creator, and the Son the Redeemer, so the Holy Ghost is considered as the Sanctifier of men; and as we are baptised in the name of these Three Persons, so in these Three is the Christian required to profess his faith. When we are told that it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure, this is particularly spoken of the Holy Ghost. There are differences of operations on the heart of man, that he may profit withal; which the Apostle tells us are all wrought by that one and the same Spirit, which is God. So that, when any of you are disposed to do what is good, it is God's holy Spirit which inclines you to do it; and when you are made sensible, that what you are tempted to do is evil, it is God the Holy Ghost, which prevents you from committing it. Therefore we are taught to pray, that by the direction of this holy Spirit, we may have a right judgment in all things, and evermore rejoice in his holy comfort.

The next Article of our belief is, that the Church, of which we have the happiness to be made members by Baptism, is not only *holy*, but *catholic*; that is, not limited, like the Jewish church, to one particular nation or people, but universal (for that is the meaning of the word catholic); comprehending all nations of the world, that profess a true faith in the LORD
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Jesus Christ, submitting themselves in all humility to his divine will, and to his sacred ordinances and instructions.

We believe also, that in this holy universal Church, there is a COMMUNION of SAINTS; that Saints, or holy persons, have communion with GOD, and with each other: They have communion with GOD, 1. *By prayer*; whereby dependent creatures are permitted to ask of GOD, whatever is needful for their souls or bodies; under a promise, that if they ask any thing according to the will of GOD, if it is really best for them, they shall certainly receive it:—2. *By reading and hearing GOD's holy Word*, by which He speaks to mankind continually in the writings of his inspired Prophets, Historians, and Apostles; and above all, by his blessed Son, teaching us all what we must believe and do to be saved: And lastly, *by his Sacraments* of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; by the former of which we are admitted into covenant with GOD, and by the latter whereof we are strengthened with might unto all goodness. The Saints have also communion or fellowship with each other; in as much as they are united together in the same faith, employed in the same acts of religious worship, and engaged in the mutual exercise of love and good works. In the course of their affairs in this world, holy men must often have communion with sinners; but they must have no fellowship with them
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in their sins: they are as opposite to each other as light to darkness. This Article of our faith teaches us particularly to consider the relation, in which, as Christians, we stand to one another. We are members of the same body, professors of the same faith, heirs of the same promises, led by the same spirit, supported by the same hope, and looking for the same salvation through Christ Jesus. How then can we but feel ourselves bound to promote each other's happiness! How contrary is it to the nature, as well as the duty of saints, or holy persons, to live in enmity one with another!

The next Article of the faith, which we profess, is THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Sin is the transgression of the Law of God.— And whereas the very best of us have departed from this law, or rule of life, doing what it forbids, or neglecting to do what it commands, we have, every one of us, cause to confess that we are sinners. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Now the wages of sin is death; and if nothing had been done to deliver us from that dreadful sentence, we must have surely died a worse death, than that of the body, we must have suffered the death of the soul, and have been separated from God, the Author and Giver of life, and excluded from happiness, and glory, for ever

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and ever. But thanks be to God, through whose mercy a Saviour hath appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself: Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust. He who had no sins of his own to suffer for, was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; He was delivered unto death for our offences. And we believe, that, through his sufferings, and death, the punishment due to our sins is removed from us; God is become a reconciled Father to his children; having graciously accepted the death of his blessed Son, as a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. But here it is very necessary, that I should guard you against a bad use that may be made of this most comfortable Article of our faith. You are never to forget, that what Christ hath been pleased to suffer for sin, hath taken away none of its hatefulness in the sight of God. Both sin, and the sinner who commits it, are nevertheless abominable to Him, who is holiness and purity itself. You must not therefore look for the forgiveness of those sins, which you have not first forsaken, with shame and sorrow that ever you committed them; and after all must remember, that your repentance only qualifies you to receive forgiveness, by making you proper objects of that mercy, which God, for the sake of Jesus Christ, is ready to bestow on every penitent and returning sinner. And surely you cannot but love God, whenever you reflect

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reflect how great things He hath done, that your sins might be forgiven. Surely you can never continue in sin, if you really love God, as you profess to do: the love of God, and the love of sin, cannot dwell together in the same breast. Draw nigh then to the Father of Mercies, and say, every one of you in the sincerity of his heart, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight; and I am not worthy to be called thy Son." Then will God receive you to his mercy, for the sake of that which Jesus Christ has done, and is continually doing for you, at the right hand of the Father: He will forgive you all that is past, and enable you, by his grace, which you must ask for in your daily prayers, to continue in the way of holiness unto your life's end: and when your bodies shall be raised again at the last day, which is the next Article that you are required to believe, He will make you partakers of LIFE EVERLASTING.

The Resurrection, or rising again of the body, to those who have a right faith in God, and a well-founded hope in his mercy through Christ, is an article so full of comfort, that it blunts the edge of the sharpest sufferings, to which we can be exposed in this world.

Many of you, my poor brethren, that now hear me, are in want of those blessings and conveniences of life, which others enjoy in great abundance.

dance. Now, is it not a comfortable thought to such of you, that when a few years are past, your perishable bodies shall be decently committed to the earth? You will be quietly laid for a time, in that place, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest; where the prisoners rest together, and hear not the voice of the oppressor; where both small and great are laid, and the servant is free from his master: After which, if you have but been faithful to God, and sober, diligent, and honest in your dealings with men, you shall arise to a new life of happiness that shall never have an end.

There is one thing, indeed, in this world, which can never be sufficiently lamented: I mean, a state of poverty and wretchedness, rendered still more insupportable by the torment of a guilty conscience.—When the world frowns upon you, and difficulties and misfortunes surround you, and you cannot look up to heaven for comfort; I grant that your situation is most deplorable: but if you can raise your thoughts with holy confidence towards God, and by faith behold the Father of Mercies as your friend; you may then, with courage and resolution, brave the storms of this tempestuous world; in a sure and certain hope of rest, and peace, and joy, when your souls and bodies shall be again united, and you shall stand before God at the last day. In what manner the resurrection of the body shall be brought to pass,

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is not your concern, neither need it be made the subject of your inquiry. It is a truth, as certain as that you now live, and hear me declaring it to you, on the authority of the Word of God. To the power of God all things are possible; and He, who, by his Word, made the world and all things therein, can, by his word, collect the scattered parts of it together, and bid your dead bones live again: He, in whose book are all our members written, can so replace them by his almighty power, that every one may receive according to the things done in his body, whether they be good or bad. The belief of this article depends on our belief of the resurrection of Christ; which, therefore, was proved to the world in every way that it was capable of being proved: it had the testimony of friends and of enemies, of angels, and of God. It was necessary that a doctrine so important, should be established in the fullest manner; because, in the certainty of Christ's resurrection that of all mankind is included. Let the belief of this truth, that your bodies shall be raised again, make you careful not to defile them by sin; that they may be presented pure, holy, and undefiled before God, when the trumpet shall awaken them from the dust, and summon you to judgment.

That the consequence of this judgment will be LIFE EVERLASTING to the righteous is the concluding article of our belief; and, also, is a doctrine so full

of comfort, that it is alone sufficient to raise the drooping spirit, to sustain the fainting heart, to sweeten your present miseries, to lighten your heavy burthens, to encourage you in all dangers, and to support you in all adversities.

By THE LIFE EVERLASTING we understand, that when the body, which hath lain in the dust of the earth, shall again be united with the soul, a life that never shall have an end, shall take place. Consider, then, how nearly you are concerned to take care that the state, on which you shall hereafter enter, be a state of happiness and unspeakable joy. This, you know, depends on the life you lead in the present world: an everlasting life of happiness, be assured, it will be to those, who have here led a godly and a christian life, doing the will of God from the heart; acting always as in his sight; diligent in their several duties, constant in their religious services, humble in their opinion of themselves, charitable in their sentiments of others, kind and gentle in their behaviour, chaste and pure in their conversation, meek and contented in their situation, just and upright towards all men; and, after all, trusting not in their own righteousness for acceptance and salvation, but looking up to Jesus, the author and finisher of their faith, to admission into that heavenly kingdom, which He hath opened for the reception of all that believe and obey the Gospel. I forbear to describe the miseries of those,

those, who, by their folly and wickedness here, deprive themselves of all hope of happiness in another world: it were bad enough, to be banished for ever from the presence of GOD, the fountain and giver of every blessing; but to be tormented for ever with evil spirits in a fire, which never shall be quenched, is to be in such a state, that I hope the bare mention of it will be sufficient to discourage you all from such a life of disobedience, as would lead you to it. From this state Christ has died to deliver you all; and, instead of it, to put you in possession of a life of joy and happiness, which shall know no end. Be ye faithful, therefore, unto the end of your lives, and obedient to his will; and then shall ye find, to your unspeakable comfort, that peace which passeth all understanding: ye shall then experience the truth of that declaration of the Apostle, St. Paul, that whatever afflictions may oppress you for a moment, shall be succeeded by a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory in Heaven:

Which GOD in His infinite mercy grant to us all, through the merits, and for the sake of his ever-blessed Son, Jesus Christ our LORD, to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be given all honour, and glory, and praise, in time and eternity.—
Amen.

LECTURE XII.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

I. Corinthians, chap. xi. ver. 23, 24, 25.

The LORD Jesus, the samenight, in which He was betrayed, took bread;

And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: This is my body, which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

I N one of my former discourses, I told you, my Friends, that I would endeavour to make you understand

derstand the nature and design of another solemn office in the Christian church, called the Sacrament of the LORD'S Supper; in which service we remember the great love of our Master and only Saviour, Jesus Christ, in dying for us on the Cross. I told you in one of the first of these Lectures, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Christ, the Son of God, who had no sin of his own to suffer for, was willing to become a sacrifice for our sins; that so the sentence of God against sinners might not be executed: He had said, *The soul that sinneth shall surely die*; by which is not meant merely such a death as you, and I, and all flesh must undergo, when our breath shall depart from our bodies; but a much worse death than this, which the soul of the wicked must endure, when it shall be separated from God, in whose presence it would otherwise have lived for evermore. To prevent so much evil to the soul as this, God himself ordains, that Jesus Christ, his only Son, equal in power, majesty, and glory with Himself, shall become man, shall be born of a virgin, in a manner too wonderful for us thoroughly to understand, and concerning which we need not, we ought not, curiously to enquire, but to believe that so it is, because a God of truth hath declared it. And Jesus Christ Himself most freely undertakes this office of mercy, to save mankind. He is born the son of a poor, as well as pure Virgin; espoused to a man, mean in his outward station,

station, but irreproachable in his character and conduct; descended, as well as the Virgin Mary, from the House of David, and, therefore, of a royal family. During his infancy and childhood, He retired with his parents, and was subject unto them; He was ready to assist in the occupation of his father, and was obedient to his commands; giving us an example, even in this his retirement, of diligence in our station, and submission to our parents, and to those that are set over us. When He was twelve years old, we hear, indeed, of his showing a degree of wisdom and understanding more than belongs to man; when, sitting in the midst of the Jewish Doctors, He confounded and surprised them with the questions which He asked, and the answers which He gave. We hear no more of Him till the fulness of the time was come, when He was to go forth among men, to preach the Gospel to such poor as yourselves; not choosing the rich in this world, but such as were rich in faith, ready to hear his sermons, and willing to do what He commanded them. To the wisdom of his words, He added the power of his miracles; by which you are to understand, such wonderful works as no mere MAN could ever have performed; such as healing the sick in a moment; feeding thousands with a few loaves of bread; giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb, and even life to those that had been dead, and had been laid for some days in the grave. The

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winds and the sea were obedient to his word ; and when He said to them, " Peace, be still," their rage and fury ceased in an instant. Even the devils were subject to his power, and departed, at his command, out of those that were possessed by them.

And now, methinks, I hear you saying, What a blessing was such a person to the world, and particularly to the people, among whom He thought proper to abide ! How delighted must they be to see and hear Him ! How unfeignedly must they love Him ! How closely must they follow Him ! How eagerly must they crowd around Him, to hear his gracious words, and be benefited by his works of mercy and kindness ! But how will you be surprised to hear, that the converts which he made were very few, whilst his enemies were many in number : nay, that He was despised and rejected of men ; and that while He was going about, and doing good where-soever He went, He had not a place where to lay His head : He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Even they, for whose benefit above all others He came, to preach the glad tidings of salvation among them, even they who had been for ages distinguished as the people of God, received Him not. Thus were three years of this precious, but comfortless life, spent in doing good, and receiving nothing but evil in return ; except from a few poor ignorant fishermen and others, who were
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ready to obey his call, and joined themselves to Him, to listen to his doctrines, and to follow his instructions. Even one of these, who were in number no more than twelve, proved a traitor, and for a small sum of money, deserted his Master, and betrayed Him; betrayed Him under the appearance of more than ordinary love and friendship. When the Jewish rulers were desirous to apprehend Him, this wicked wretch (good had it been for him if he had never been born!) gave them a sign how they might know for a certainty, which was JESUS, whom he undertook to betray to them:—"Whomsoever I shall kiss," says he, "the same is He."—Accordingly, upon the soldiers' and officers' appearance, Judas, the vile betrayer of his Master, ran up to him, and with traitorous lips He cries, "Hail, Master!" and kissed Him; upon which they instantly advanced to take Him. At their first approach, by the power of his word, He struck them to the ground; but afterwards He delivered Himself up to their will.—If I should dwell on the particulars of what followed, and describe to you the sufferings of this innocent and holy person;—how he was buffeted with their hands,—scourged with rods,—crowned with thorns,—dragged from one judge to another,—accused by false witnesses,—forsaken of all his disciples,—and denied over and over by one of them in particular, who had said he would sooner die than deny his master;—if I should carry you
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towards the place of his death, and show you your Saviour, fainting under the weight of that cross, upon which He was soon to be lifted up ;—if I were to describe Him, pierced through his hands and feet with great nails, and hanging miserably and disgracefully between two thieves, from nine o'clock in the morning, till three o'clock in the afternoon, full of pain and torment ; calling upon God, his heavenly Father, in those words, which David had said, a thousand years before, He would make use of ; “ My God ! my God ! why hast thou forsaken me ? ”—if I should represent to you, the vail of the temple split asunder,—the rocks rent,—the sun entirely darkened at noon-day,—the graves opened,—the dead arising,—and all nature, heaven, earth, and the grave, confounded and amazed at this astonishing event :—I say, if I were to dwell on these affecting particulars, as I might, I know not whether you would feel more horror at the act, or hatred against the actors in this dreadful business : I know not whether you would be more apt to lament and bewail the misery and sufferings, or admire and adore the love and goodness, of the Son of God. Your hearts, even now, must needs *burn* within you at this poor imperfect story of his woe : how much more deeply would the sight itself have affected you ! His agony, which produced great drops of bloody sweat, would have amazed you ; his patience under it would have astonished you ;—while in the midst of his torment He cried out, “ O

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my Father, not my will, but thine be done." Your blood, methinks, would have boiled with rage against his persecutors; you would have been ready to inflict a thousand deaths on *Judas* that betrayed Him; on *Pilate* that condemned Him; on the Scribes and Pharisees that endeavoured to ensnare Him; on the perjured witnesses that gave false evidence against Him, and on that blasphemous multitude, which preferred a murderer before Him.—But let me beseech you to consider, what share you yourselves, as the sinful children of Adam, had in these transactions. Was it not because the first Adam had eaten the fruit of the forbidden tree, that the second Adam, which is Christ, was hanged on the accursed tree of the cross? Though the Jews were the wicked instruments, were not our sins the first great cause, in the sufferings and death of Him, who is the LORD of life? Did He not bear our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, through Him, might be saved? And thus was the guilt of all our sins, if sincerely bewailed and forsaken, washed away by his precious blood, which ten thousand sacrifices would never have been able to atone for. Nothing less than the blood of Him, who was GOD as well as man, could ever have purified us from the guilt, or have delivered us from the punishment of sin. You will all then agree with me, in magnifying the pardoning grace and mercy of GOD, in sending his Son into the world. Indeed you cannot be affected
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as you ought with what you have just now heard described, and not ask with David, "What reward shall I give unto the LORD for all these benefits, which, by his precious blood-shedding, He hath obtained for me?" Now, if you really are in earnest when you ask this question, the same inspired Writer will supply you with an answer, and you will be ready to imitate his example: "I will receive," says he, "the cup of salvation, and will call upon the name of the LORD." But in order to your rightly understanding what is meant by the Cup of Salvation, I must desire you to remember what were the words which I delivered to you in the beginning of this Discourse: *The LORD JESUS, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread;*

And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying: This cup is the New Testament in my blood: This do ye, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

You here see the true meaning and intention of this holy Sacrament; but yet these words do not fully set before you the benefits arising from the observation of it.

The LORD Jesus, more attentive to the future benefit of his Church, than regardful of his own approaching sufferings, the very night, in which He was about to be betrayed, and delivered up into the hands of his enemies, took bread, in the presence of his disciples; and when He had given thanks, (teaching you never to eat or drink, without a thankful heart and a thanksgiving tongue) He brake the bread, and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat, this is to represent my body, which is now about to be given for you on the cross: take and eat this, and do it in remembrance of me: whenever ye eat the bread thus broken, and delivered to you in this holy Sacrament, remember my body broken for your sakes; and whenever you drink of this wine, remember that it is the nearest representation that can be made of my blood poured out on the cross, for the salvation of mankind: and thus will ye be showing forth the LORD's death, till He cometh to judge the world."

It may be necessary, however, here, to caution you against an error, into which many that are better informed in other matters than yourselves, have fallen; who fancy, that, because we are required to eat of that Bread, and to drink of that Cup, *in remembrance of CHRIST*, this is the *only* purpose of receiving the holy Communion: If this were all, it would be little more than an unprofitable ceremony, and the best purposes of
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its institution would not be answered. Much more is implied in this religious service; in which, we not only call to our remembrance what great things our LORD and Saviour hath done and suffered for us; but we also profess our faith in the all sufficient merits of his sacrifice, when His body was broken, and His blood was poured out on the Cross: we declare our thankfulness for such an instance of His unspeakable mercy: and, by joining with our Fellow-Christians in this most solemn act of our religion, we show forth our charity towards all men; our communion and fellowship with those in particular, who are engaged in the same service, who are partakers of the same spiritual privileges, and hope to be admitted to the same glory with ourselves. We call to our remembrance those declarations of Christ Himself, which we cannot apply to any other than this Sacrament; wherein He declares, that He is *the Bread of Life*;—*the Living Bread, which came down from Heaven*;—and that *if any man eat of this Bread*, (always supposing it to be done with an holy and suitable disposition of mind) *he shall live for ever*: We recall to our minds that word of His, which ought to insure our constant observance of this duty, and which offers the greatest encouragement imaginable to every worthy receiver: *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you: Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the*

last day: For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed: He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

Is it possible, that these expressions can relate to any thing, but to the service, which I am at this time recommending to you? And is it possible to conceive greater blessings, than are here annexed to the performance of it? Without receiving the body and blood of Christ, we are declared to be spiritually dead; but if we duly receive it, we have the privilege of being united with Christ;—"we dwell in Him, and He in us, we are one with Christ, and Christ with us;" and we have His gracious promise, that He will raise us up at the last day; which expression implies the greatest of all possible blessings: For though, at the last day, it is true that all men shall rise again with their own bodies, that all may be judged according to their works; yet here our Saviour must be understood as encouraging us to the observance of this duty by a most gracious promise, that such as have shown forth their faith in His death, shall be raised up to be partakers of his Everlasting Kingdom. These considerations, I hope, will be instead of a thousand arguments, to induce you to think yourselves guilty of an omission and neglect of a positive duty, whenever you turn your backs on the LORD's Table, at a time when the holy Communion is about to be administered. You certainly despise the best means of furthering
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your growth in grace now, and of brightening your prospect of eternal glory hereafter.

From what I have said, you will see how necessary it is, that you should engage in the performance of this, as of every other religious service, with all possible seriousness, and reverent attention of mind.

But here let me remind you, that this most solemn duty of our religion is not to be performed carelessly, and without much serious thought. When you are about to receive this bread and wine, you are to draw nigh, with a deep sense of the hatefulnes of sin in general, which made it necessary that the body of Christ should be broken, and his blood poured out on the cross, to save us from the punishment justly due to our sins: and you must remember, with unfeigned sorrow, that though you had no share in crucifying your Saviour, yet you have set at nought his sufferings, whenever you have been neither afraid nor ashamed to disregard his threatenings, and disobey his laws. This you must seriously call to mind, whenever you are about to receive these tokens of your Saviour's love, and of his sufferings for your sake; and you must resolve, for the time to come, more frequently to remember what He hath done and suffered for you, and to make a better return for his merciful kindness. You must believe, that God is able, and you must be thankful that He is willing and

and desirous, to bestow on you the blessing of eternal life, for the sake of Him who suffered death upon the cross, to purchase that inestimable blessing for mankind.

But there is one disposition of mind, which, above all others, you must bring with you to this heavenly feast; and that is, a perfect good-will towards all men, even towards your enemies: if you have a quarrel against any, you must first be at peace with him, and heartily reconciled: if he refuses to be reconciled to you, this is not to hinder you from the observance of this duty: if you are ready and willing to forgive him, you have the disposition and frame of mind, which is expected from you; and you may then, so far as Christian charity is concerned, draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort. And be assured, that you will find it the best preservative against sin; the best support under all your troubles; the best remedy for all the diseases of your minds: you will grow more sober, more virtuous, more diligent, more obedient to your masters, more kind and friendly one towards another; you will be more strictly just and honest in all your dealings, and, in consequence of all this, more easy and happy; more comfortable while you live, and better prepared and more ready to die. You will be united in your affections to the Author and Giver of all blessings upon earth; and the first desire of
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your hearts will be, when you leave this world, to dwell with Him in a state of perfect happiness and glory; where, with Angels and Archangels, and all the Host of Heaven, you may laud and magnify your Great Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, to all eternity:

To which blessed state may God of his infinite mercy bring us all, through the merits of Jesus Christ our LORD: to whom, with the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, be ascribed all honour and glory, thanksgiving and praise, henceforth and for evermore. Amen. Amen.

T H E E N D.

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